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# Artists & ILLUSTRATORS

TIPS • TECHNIQUES • IDEAS • INSPIRATION

## Painting outdoors

Improve your watercolour and oil skills

## Dame Barbara Hepworth

A new exhibition explores her ties with St Ives

## Sketch people with confidence

...whatever your setting

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~ Marco Campos



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Nitram Fusain Aquarelle Charcoal Watercolour 50g



Marco Campos (b. 1978) is a contemporary figurative painter in Costa Rica, who works primarily in oil painting, watercolour, and charcoal, among other mediums. His work pursues a contemporary realism achieved mainly by slight shifts of hues and tonal values, always trying to maintain a fine balance between careful details and loose brushstrokes. Marco's art is heavily inspired by the works of the Old Masters, and is also notable for evoking strong emotions such as nostalgia, calmness, or sadness. Recently, the International Guild of Realism gave Marco's work the 'Best of Show' award at their 16th annual exhibition.  
[www.marco camposfineart.com](http://www.marco camposfineart.com) Instagram: @marco.campos.artist



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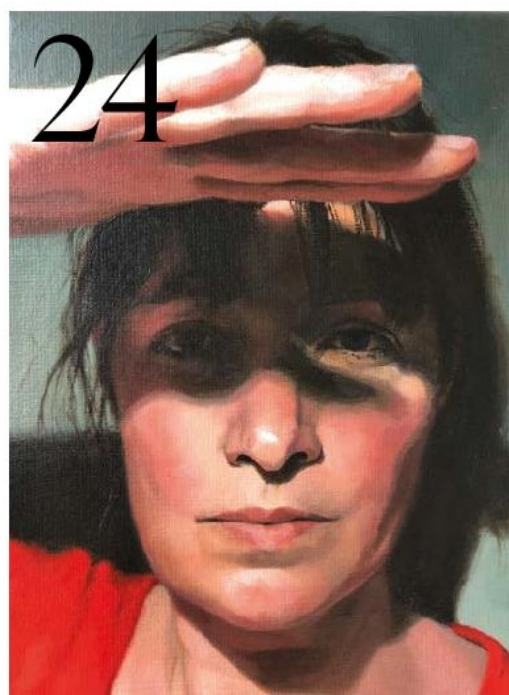
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THE MONTH'S COVER BY ANTHONY COWLAND

# There's a lot...



... for you to get stuck into in this issue of *Artists & Illustrators* with stories that will both inspire and enthuse. Highlights include a feature on the life and work of Dame Barbara Hepworth, to mark a new exhibition in her beloved St Ives. Then, we celebrate Quentin Blake as the great illustrator approaches his ninetieth year. Practical features take shape with a London street scene in watercolour, a lively portrait in oil as

well as an informative feature on how to sketch people with confidence when you're out and about. We also reveal the winner of the British Art Prize's People's Choice Award – chosen by you – which rounds off a super successful competition and exhibition. We're now excited for next year's event – and hope you are too!

As if that's not enough, there's also a free still life How-To Guide for you to download online (see below). In print or online, the *Artists & Illustrators* team are full of art aha moments. Now all that's left is for you to get stuck in and get painting!

Niki Browes Editor

# Artists & ILLUSTRATORS

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ISSN NO. 1473-4729

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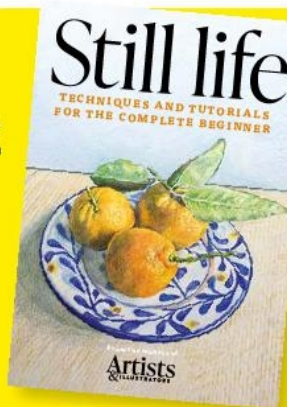
(quote CAAIXM22)

## FREE HOW-TO GUIDE DOWNLOAD

Brought to you by the team behind *Artists & Illustrators*, every reader will have access to an edited extract taken from the book of the same name by London-based artist Susie Johns.

To access the guide, click:

artistsandillustrators.co.uk/still-life-ebook



## INTRODUCING



### JIM FORD

Jim is a US artist and designer based in Milwaukee. An award-winning type designer, he is responsible for some of Monotype's most iconic typefaces. In his art practice, Ford's work is mercurial and diverse, spanning from abstract collage and painting to sculpture and installation.



### AMANDA HODGES

Amanda is a freelance Arts writer specialising in biography. Highlights have included interviewing the late Sir John Mills and Paddington author Michael Bond; here she delves into the illustrious career of a man similarly renowned in his field: illustrator Quentin Blake.



### MAX PANKS

Max has always been influenced by dramatic light and movement, and his style in watercolour lends itself perfectly to capturing the spontaneity which surrounds us. Having lived in the Cotswolds, various cities and even on the sea, the stark contrast captured in his work is brought to light.



### EMMA LEYFIELD

Specialising in observational watercolours, Emma is passionate about traditional methods of drawing. Her work is inspired by the golden age of illustration and is often described as nostalgic; reminding the viewer of their childhood. She loves to capture the wonder of the world.



# Sketchbook

TIPS • ADVICE • EXHIBITIONS • NEWS • REVIEWS

EDITED BY RAMSHA VISTRO

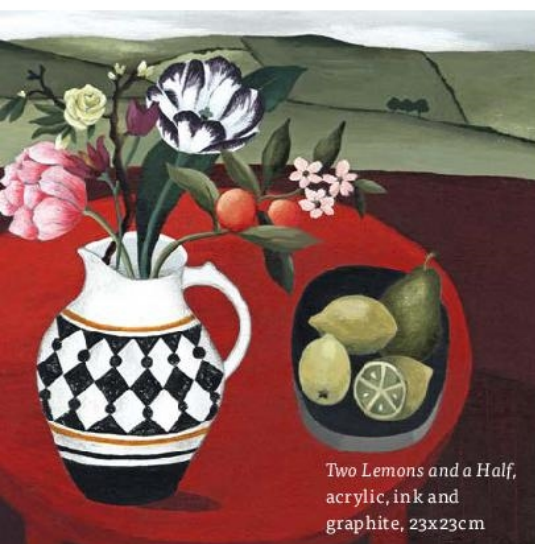
## Things we love...

Visitors to Compton Verney, Warwickshire can enjoy a new touring exhibition showcasing 10 masterpieces until 15th January 2023. *Dutch Flowers* examines the origins of Northern European flower painting, the height of its popularity in the Dutch Golden Age and its final flowering in the late 18th century. At the turn of the 17th century, Netherlandish artists were among the first to produce paintings that exclusively depicted flowers. This period saw the establishment of botanical gardens in the Netherlands as well as a booming international trade in exotic cultivars. [comptonverney.org.uk](http://comptonverney.org.uk)



Jan van Huysum,  
*Hollyhocks and  
Other Flowers in a  
Vase, 1702-20*





*Two Lemons and a Half,*  
acrylic, ink and  
graphite, 23x23cm

### GIFTS INSTEAD OF FLOWERS

Visit this online virtual exhibition stand where artists and small businesses show their unique but affordable products. Everything shown on the site is £80 and less, which is the same price as a large bouquet of flowers. Each artist has their own page, similar to a virtual exhibition stand, where they can showcase their work. Customers can visit the artist's own site with all transactions conducted between the artist and customer.

[giftsinsteadofflowers.com](http://giftsinsteadofflowers.com)

PAULA SHARPLES

## Don't miss...

Peter Brown's new solo exhibition on until 15 January 2023. *Bath, Bristol and Beyond* follows his footsteps through the streets and green places of Bath and Bristol, as well as places further afield and domestic scenes from his home. Brown's atmospheric views are captured in different states – quiet during lockdown, then bustling again – and in all weathers, even during snowstorms when Brown works outside wearing fingerless mittens. The exhibition features over 100 new oil paintings by the artist which are also available to view online. Victoria Art Gallery, Bridge Street, Bath BA2 4AT

[victoriagal.org.uk](http://victoriagal.org.uk)



*Under the Silver Birches,*  
Laura Place, oil on  
canvas, 50.8x63.5cm

PETER BROWN



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This Certificate programme is a bespoke, flexible way to study. It's ideal if you're looking to develop your technical art skills but have limited time. The programme has two pathways. The Fine Art Certificate allows you either to focus on one discipline or to work across multiple disciplines, from Painting, Drawing, 3D/ Sculpture or Digital Media. The Portraiture Certificate focuses on portraiture and figurative painting and drawing.

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[artacademy.org.uk/certificate](http://artacademy.org.uk/certificate)

## BOOK OF THE MONTH

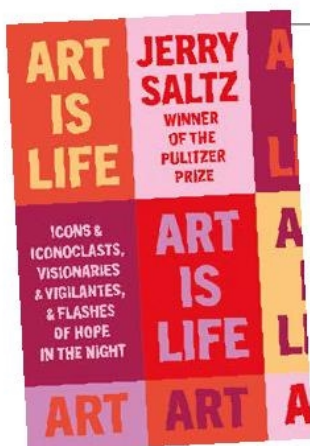
### ART IS LIFE

By Jerry Saltz

Jerry Saltz is one of the most-watched writers about art and artists, and a passionate champion of the importance of art in our shared cultural life. Since the 1990s, he has been an indispensable cultural voice: witty and provocative, and has attracted contemporary

readers to fine art as few critics have. Now, in his new book *Art Is Life*, Jerry Saltz draws on two decades of work to offer a real-time survey of contemporary art as a barometer of our times. The result is an openhearted and irresistibly readable appraisal by one of our most important cultural observers.

*Ilex Press, £25.00*



### Join us online!



If you love the contents in this magazine, you're going to fall head over heels for the fabulous *Artists & Illustrators* website. It's one of the biggest and best digital resources for artists and a refreshing new feel makes our How To guides, competitions and interviews even more insightful to read.

[artistsandillustrators.co.uk](http://artistsandillustrators.co.uk)

## THE DIARY

Open calls,  
prizes and artist  
opportunities

### 11 DECEMBER

The Visual Art Open competition aims to give artists the ultimate platform to develop their artistic passion and career. Prize funds total over £3,000.

[visualartopen.com](http://visualartopen.com)

### 11 DECEMBER

The Royal Highland & Agricultural Society of Scotland invites artists to transform a fibre glass sheep. 35 artists will receive an honorarium of £1,000.

[royalhighlandshow.org](http://royalhighlandshow.org)

### 16 DECEMBER

Enter your 2D and 3D artworks for Art Gemini Prize 2022. The first two winning artists will be awarded a two-week residency in Bali. Prize funds total £4,000.

[artgeminiprize.com](http://artgeminiprize.com)





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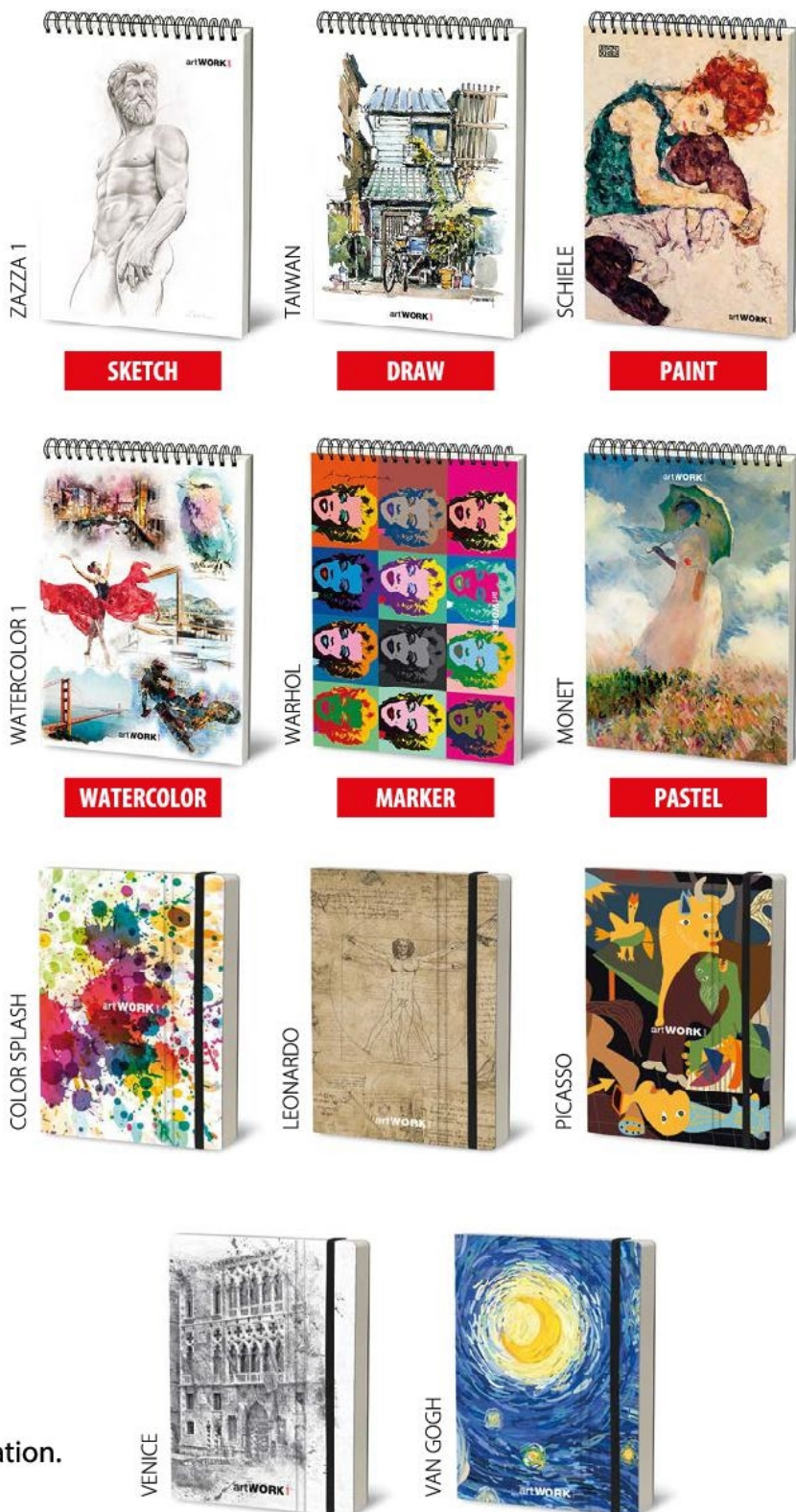
**New!**

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# Exhibitions

THE BEST ART SHOWS TO VISIT FROM DECEMBER ONWARDS



SARAH BIFFIN, SELF PORTRAIT, WATERCOLOUR, © PHILIP MOULD & COMPANY

## WITHOUT HANDS: THE ART OF SARAH BIFFIN

Until 21st December 2022

Artist Sarah Biffin (1784-1850) came from humble origins yet rose to fame in the 19th century as a remarkably talented miniaturist, undertaking commissions for royalty.

As a working-class, disabled female artist, her artwork – many proudly signed “without hands” – is a testament to her talent and life-long determination.

But despite her prolific artistic output and appearance in numerous published memoirs, letters and literary works by leading figures of her age, Sarah Biffin’s remarkable life has been largely overlooked by art historians. Until now. A new exhibition at Philip Mould & Company – the first to focus on Sarah in a century – hopes to rectify this.

18-19 Pall Mall, London, SW1Y 5LU  
philipmould.com



WINTER 100221 STEPH FAWBERT, WATERCOLOUR ON PAPER, 30X30CM

## FAIR GROUND

Until 8th January

Glyndebourne has announced the return of its annual exhibition of Sussex-based artists, *Fair Ground*. Among the 40 pieces on show are bold and colourful watercolours, energetic pastel drawings, collage, mixed media works and dry point etchings. *Fair Ground* will be available for ticket holders to see in person by appointment and online.

New Road, Lewes BN8 5UU

glyndebourne.com



## SCOTT COVERT

25th January - 26th March 2023

For nearly forty years, Scott Covert’s practice has evolved around his long-standing series of Monument paintings: rubbings of gravestones in chalk, oil stick or charcoal on canvas and paper. In this decades-long project, he has accumulated a vast collection of works. This is the artist’s first solo presentation outside of the US.

1A Nelsons Row, London SW4 7JR  
studiovoltaire.org

SCOTT COVERT, SEVENTEEN RENE RICARDS (THINKING AND THREE DONDIS, 2019





## CARAGH THURING

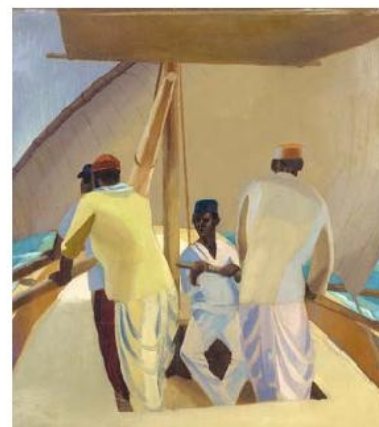
**Until 12th March  
2023**

This exhibition showcases the work of Caragh Thuring and is the artist's first UK exhibition in six years. The show, which consists of more than 20 artworks, includes paintings, drawings and monotypes created over the last 15 years.

Thuring's unique compositions oscillate between the humorous and the quotidian, juxtaposing signs and imagery from her recurring iconography of volcanoes, bricks, submarines, tartan, human silhouettes, and flora, and exploring where the natural and the manufactured worlds collide.

**Hastings Contemporary,**  
Rock-a-Nore Road,  
Hastings TN34 3DW  
[hastingscontemporary.org](http://hastingscontemporary.org)

© CARAGH THURING. COURTESY THE ARTIST AND THOMAS DANE GALLERY. PHOTO: RICHARD IVEY



## THOSE REMARKABLE CARLINES

**Until 10th April 2023**

This is the first public exhibition in over 40 years to focus on the three accomplished and influential artists: Sydney (1888-1929), Hilda (1889-1950) and Richard Carline (1896-1980). It celebrates the work of the talented family, bringing together pieces from collections across the country; many of which have not been seen in public for over 30 years.

**Burgh House, Hampstead,**  
London, NW3 1LT  
[burghhouse.org.uk](http://burghhouse.org.uk)

SYDNEY CARLINE. FISHERMEN IN BOMBAY HARBOUR. OIL ON CANVAS, 82x71cm

## IN PLAIN SIGHT

**Until 12th February  
2023**

This major exhibition explores the different ways we see and are seen. Bringing together 144 objects and artworks, it invites visitors to encounter different experiences of sighted, partially sighted and blind people to consider the subjectivities of vision and blindness and question the central place sight holds in human society. *In Plain Sight* unfolds across four themes: symbolism of the eye, bias in visual perception, eyewear and identity, and the interconnection between senses.

**183 Euston Road, NW1 2BE**  
[wellcomecollection.org](http://wellcomecollection.org)



A FORTUNETELLER READING THE PALM OF A SOLDIER (c. 17TH CENTURY) PIETRO DELLA VECCHIA. OIL ON CANVAS © WELLCOME COLLECTION



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*Artists & Illustrators* is giving away a free digital copy of *Still life, Techniques and Tutorials for the Complete Beginner* to every reader. Download yours today!

**B**ROUGHT TO YOU by the team behind *Artists & Illustrators*, every reader will have access to an edited extract taken from the book of the same name by London-based artist Susie Johns. We've cherry-picked three completely different How-To features from the book, to give you the chance to study three different types of still life subjects in different mediums.

Each tutorial has a list of the materials and tools required, step-by-step photographs of the work along with informative text, tips and strategies for getting the best results. By working through the tutorials, you will gradually develop your skills and build confidence until you feel equipped to attempt any still life.

This is a useful guide to painting simple compositions using everyday objects you'll find at home. *Still life* will help you go from novice to fully-fledged artist in no time at all.

Get ready and get painting!

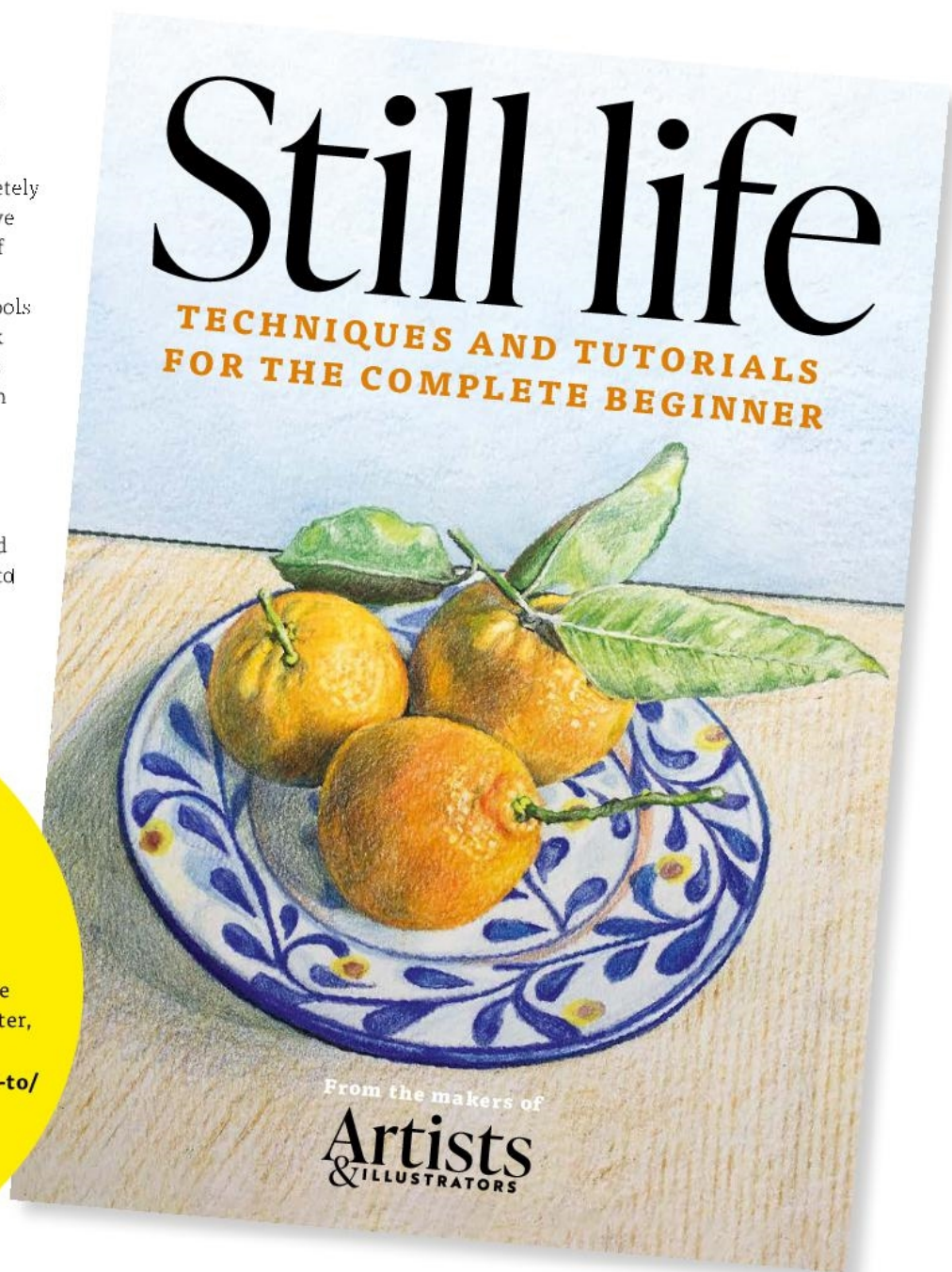
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From there, you will find instructions on how to go to the app or simply download a version onto your device.

Enjoy!





## PRIZE DRAW



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Enter our prize draw to express your artistic intention

**W**hen we paint, we work with our heads, hearts and hands. Everything comes together through our brushes and knives. Our work matters. Our process matters. And our tools matter. That's why, this month, we have teamed up with Gamblin to offer eight lucky readers of *Artists & Illustrators* the chance to each win a gift package worth £135. With sustainably crafted tools to spark joy and support a lifetime of painting, Gamblin believes every artist deserves the right tools for the job.

Their thoughtfully designed Studio Painting Knives – expertly made for oil, acrylic and gouache painters – have a non-reflective, one-piece carbon steel blade which means no more blades that break off

or coatings that flake off. The FSC Certified wood handles are carved into an ergonomic shape and then dipped into colour for easy identification in the studio.

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With the Gamblin Ground and Gesso Blade, you get a perfect, even application from edge-to-edge in a fraction of the time, with less mess and no waste. Best of all, it is the first and only artist's tool made from 100% recycled material. Wipe clean after use and reuse your Ground and Gesso Blade over and over. To learn more, visit: [gamblincolors.com](http://gamblincolors.com)



### THE PRIZE

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### HOW TO ENTER

Enter by noon on 30 January 2023, either at [artistsandillustrators.co.uk/competitions](http://artistsandillustrators.co.uk/competitions) or by filling in the form below and returning it to: Gamblin Prize Draw, Artists & Illustrators, Chelsea Magazine Company Ltd, Jubilee House, 2 Jubilee Place, London SW3 3TQ

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This  
month's  
spotlight on a  
Portfolio Plus  
member

# We present...

**ANTHONY COWLAND**

The cover artist whose passion for art started with a prize in school

**A**NTHONY COWLAND SPENT HIS EARLY YEARS travelling and living abroad with his family, which ignited in him a desire to be a pilot, sea captain or racing driver. This was further fuelled by the fact that his father had a small boat, fixed vintage sports cars and taught aeronautical engineering.

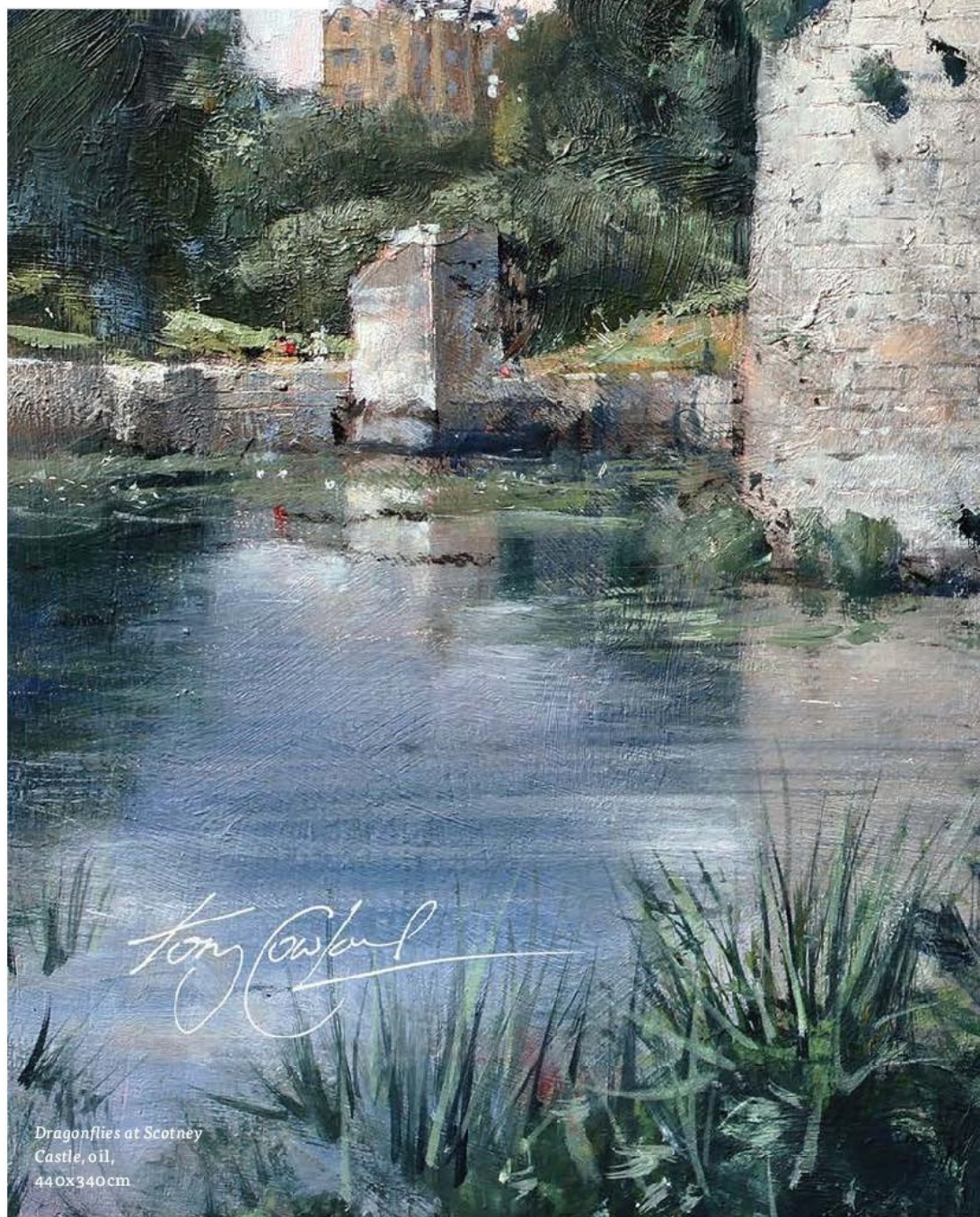
But very quickly after joining primary school, he fell in love with drawing and painting. "I was about eight when I was very proud to win a little competition with a painting of a Swift. A year or so later, I treasured the badge I was sent for entering art for the Blue Peter gallery; I think that painting was of an elephant."

Anthony mainly paints in oils and uses gouache and acrylic for some illustration work but, by his own admission, doesn't cope very well with pastels. "Oils are practical when working on a number of paintings concurrently. I can then use the same palette for all of those paintings even if the lighting, colours or tones are completely different. I just flit from easel to easel – rather like conducting an orchestra."

His aim is to achieve a subtle composition with tone, colour and narrative so that the viewer may get a first impression and then discover more as the painting is studied. Most of his living is made from commissions and, while he doesn't usually stray into the print world, he does occasionally exhibit in galleries. "I often need the discipline of a deadline."

"I don't think my work goes anywhere near breaking any artistic boundaries although I am very proud and happy to have received various prizes and awards on my art journey since that first primary school prize. I will never stop looking and learning."

[portfolio.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/  
anthonycowland](http://portfolio.artistsandillustrators.co.uk/anthonycowland)











Ponda, oil,  
30.5x30.5cm





# Julie Brunn

This artist enjoys portraying the softness and vulnerability in all animals through alla prima painting, from her garden studio next to the stables, *Ramsha Vistro* learns ►



## HOW I WORK IN THE STUDIO

**J**ULIE BRUNN'S INTEREST IN ART was unusual in her household as her immediate family wasn't creative. Her father was a chemical engineer, mother a secretary and brother a mathematician. But her love for painting animals was always prevalent. "I can remember my love for drawing and painting from as soon as I could hold a pencil; and it was always animals that I wanted to paint."

She was very detailed, almost photorealist, in her technique so her biggest problem was that she rarely finished anything she started because of the time it took to complete. Though, whilst studying a foundation degree in art at Exeter College, she learnt to be more expressive and enjoy the beauty in mark making, rather than fixating on every detail. "By the time I reached university, I was a much more confident painter. I studied for my degree in Fine Art at the Birmingham College of Art, where I learnt of the concept and about pushing the boundaries of art."

But Julie decided not to pursue art after university as "being an artist full time felt like an impossible hurdle and an unlikely career." So, she decided to change direction and start a career in graphic design. Animals remained a constant throughout these changing times, though. "Even at university, I had dogs and a horse. So, when I moved to Dorset with my husband in 2003 and saw an advertisement for a lion keeper's job at Longleat Safari Park, I had to apply."

This opened up a career working with many species of wild and domestic animals. During this time of her life, Julie didn't paint or draw and had lost all confidence in her artistic abilities. "My time at Longleat, and later Monkey World where I was in charge of the small monkey section, was one of the most memorable and wonderful experiences of my life. Working so closely with such extraordinary animals, particularly the rescued primates at Monkey World, was a privilege and inspiration. Being able to be a part of something that helps animals directly felt like my vocation in life."

It wasn't until Julie started a family that she picked up her brushes again. "It was a bit like relearning to paint. I had always painted with acrylics and sometimes watercolour, but I felt I needed to develop my skills and try oils again." This was a steep learning curve for her and although she immediately started by painting and drawing animals, she actually learnt how to handle oils through semi-abstract landscapes. "It took me a while to find my voice but when I found a good cause to support, the passion for my



art started to flourish." Her cause was Spanish hunting dogs called Podencos. She painted them for a few years; telling their stories and raising much-needed funds for the rescues in Spain.

Julie tries to give back to animals as much as she can by raising money for wildlife charities. She became involved with a few charities, particularly Artists for Painted Dogs, which has an annual exhibition/competition. "In 2021, I was selected as a winner with the prize of a trip to South Africa where I will spend a week with Wildlife Act's African Wild Dog project. This will be so special, not only because I will get to see

first-hand where the money that's raised through the exhibition has gone, but I will also get to study one of my favourite animals in the wild. Painting *en plein air* isn't something I often get the chance to do as I mostly work from photographs, which is far easier with a subject that often moves! However, being out in the field sketching from life will be a rare opportunity with such an incredible animal."

Over the years, Julie's interest in wildlife has taken up a lot more of her time. Her selection as a David Shepherd Wildlife Artist of the Year finalist ignited in her the same passion she had whilst working at Monkey



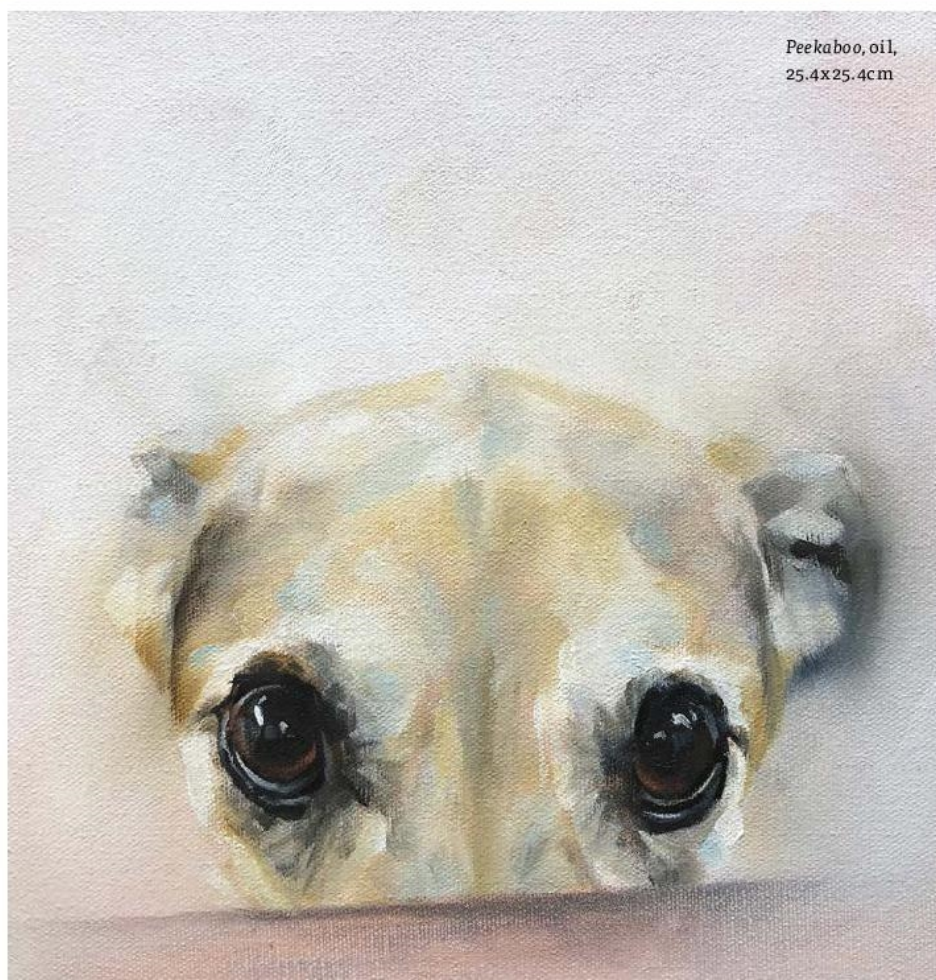
**I believe there is  
beauty in all species;  
even in those  
who have a sinister  
reputation**

World. "I find that I am often drawn to the underdog, so to speak. I choose animals, like the vulture, hyena or wild dog for example, that people don't always see the appeal in. I aim for the viewer to see the softness and vulnerability in the animal whilst seeing their beauty and strength as I believe there is beauty in all species; even in those who have a sinister reputation."

Although she has a passion for painting wildlife, Julie also loves painting her own animals, in particular her sighthounds of which she has four: Willow, Bella, Woody and Blanquita. Dogs have always been a large part of Julie's life and she can't ►



Stan, oil,  
15x23cm

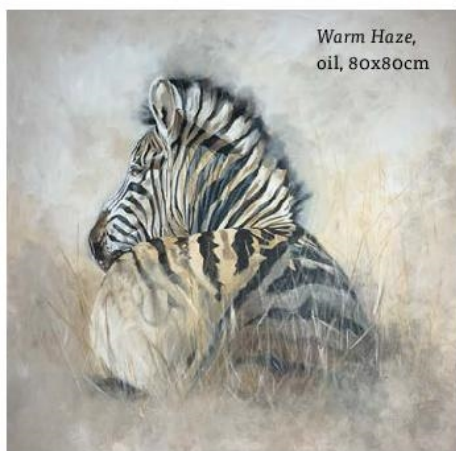


Peekaboo, oil,  
25.4x25.4cm

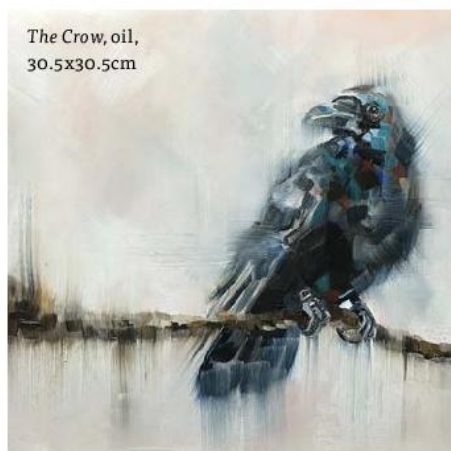




Digby, oil,  
61x76cm



Warm Haze,  
oil, 80x80cm



The Crow, oil,  
30.5x30.5cm



Merciless  
Beauty, oil,  
71.12x50.8cm

remember a time when she didn't have them. And although she grew up with dogs, it wasn't until she left home that her passion for sighthounds started. "My husband and I rescued our first dog Ben, a retired Greyhound, 24 years ago and since then we have had various lurchers and whippets along the way. I adore painting their long, elegant features coupled with their soulful and expressive eyes. My style of soft ethereal lines emphasises the beautiful, kind and loving creatures that they are."

Julie's studio space is in her home in Devon, specifically in the garden next to the stables so she can keep an eye on the horses. She's not much of a messy artist but her painting table is – what some may call – an organised mess, as she knows where everything is. "I work mostly at this table with an easel and have about 20 brushes in my hand and one in my mouth at any one time."

She's never had a large studio space so keeping herself compact is quite important. For larger pieces she tends to work from a donkey easel, looking out into the garden where the occasional squirrel and local birds pass by, which she finds a bit too distracting. She paints best whilst listening to music, which can be anything from alternative rock to house – having a good beat helps her with the rhythm of the painting and "becomes a bit like a dance with brushes."

With eight horses, eight dogs and two teenagers, Julie's days are pretty full. Her painting rarely begins before midday, once all the dogs and horses have had their needs looked after. Her afternoons are often interrupted by school runs and looking after the menagerie again. "I found that a good time to paint is often in the evening when all the other jobs are done, so having good daylight lamps is essential."

Her medium of choice is oil as she loves "how oils take so long to dry allowing the paint to be manipulated, pushed and pulled until I have the right mark. I often work quite small as I prefer alla prima. However, when working on a larger scale, I do enjoy creating glazes." Julie also loves to sketch, as it allows her to experiment with ideas and play with the paint, working out how to make a mark that will transform a painting from a technical study into a piece of art. She'll occasionally take a smaller sketch and use it as inspiration for a larger piece, but her impatience usually requires her to complete the sketch and move on to the next very quickly. "My problem isn't lack of inspiration, it's more which animal I should paint next," she laughs. Luckily, she's got enough inspiration at home.

[juliebrunn.com](http://juliebrunn.com) □





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## HOW I MAKE IT WORK

## Amy McKimm

Professional pet portrait artist Amy McKimm shares how she's found success in just two years

**B**UILDING MY CAREER as a full-time artist was strangely not something I ever really expected or planned for. It was all a bit sudden in the spring of 2020; during that first COVID lockdown. I'd bought a tin of pastel pencils and a few sheets of Clairefontaine Pastelmat at the beginning of the year, so lockdown gave me the perfect opportunity to practise and learn as much as I could. Within a very small space of time, I'd built up a solid three months of commissions. My husband suggested I quit my full-time job as a vehicle inspector and 'make this my job.' That's exactly what I did, and I've never looked back.

At the start of this year, I began hosting pastel pencil workshops at my local coffee shop and now offer full-day workshops. With the help of local businesses, I also host mini art breaks with accommodation, treatments and personalised art tuition, and advise artists looking to do pet portrait commissions on the business side of things too.

Animals have always been an important part of my life which is why I'm at my happiest drawing them. I completely understand the bond people have with their pets, so I'm in tune with why a portrait is so special to them. Social media is mainly where I market my work. The key is learning how to put your work in front of the right people. I love talking with other pet owners I meet out walking. Don't be afraid to introduce your work to people you meet in your daily life; it could well lead to commissions.

[amymckimmart.co.uk](http://amymckimmart.co.uk)



**ABOVE** Lilly, pencil on clairefontaine pastelmat, 35.5x50.8cm  
**LEFT** Milli, pastel and pencil on clairefontaine pastelmat, 35.6x50.8cm



### AMY'S TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE IT AS A FULL-TIME ARTIST

# 1

Put yourself out there. Social media is a great way to share your work with a large audience for free. Share, not only your work, but your process, your thoughts and very importantly, YOU. Genuine connections are so valuable to growing your audience. People love to know the person behind the art itself.

# 2

Have a positive mindset. Wipe away any negative thoughts that are holding you back from doing a job. If you want something badly enough, it will happen. Surround yourself with positive people, say yes more and good things will come your way.

# 3

Gain inspiration from other artists and don't be afraid to ask questions along the way. I'm forever grateful for the advice of fellow Instagram artists.

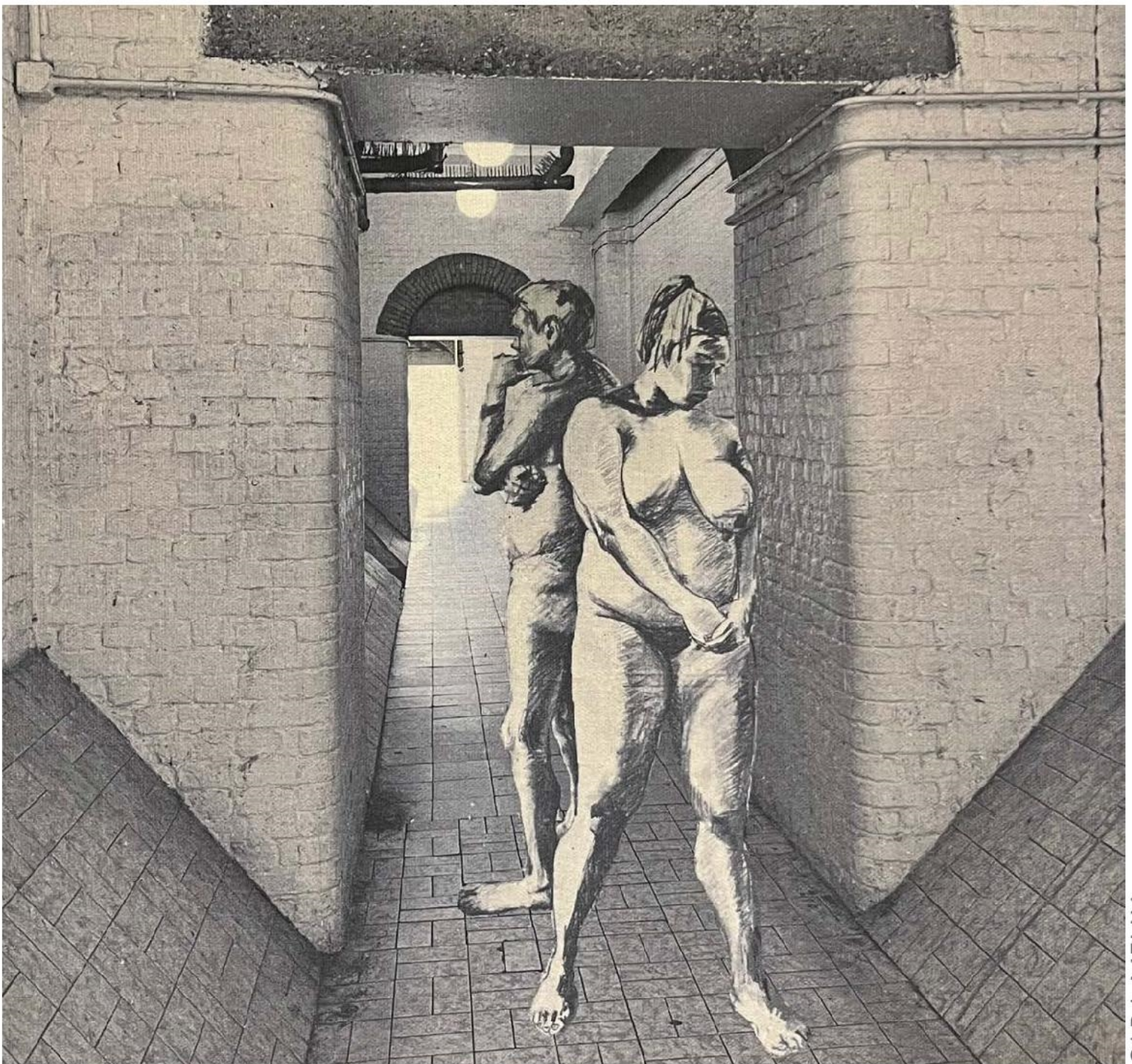


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SARA MELLY



# Rebecca Holton

With work in private collections in the United Kingdom, Europe, America and Asia, award winning artist **REBECCA HOLTON** hasn't looked back since turning pro. She tells *Niki Browes* about her art journey and has a few encouraging words for you, too...



A FULL-TIME PORTRAIT PAINTER and figurative artist, Rebecca Holton was born in Oxford to two teachers. Her father did a job swap with an Australian biologist when she was four years old, so the family upped sticks to the other side of the world for a year where she went to school in Brisbane. At the time, this was very unusual – to experience living in a different country and culture and then returning to your own – yet it instilled a strong love of travel from an early age.

The eldest of four children, creativity was very dominant in their upbringing; they played musical instruments, belonged to choirs, frequently created art with the 'make-and-do' box – a collection of used packets, cardboard and lids – whilst they were also members of the local drama groups. Despite excelling at art, she was only able to do Art at A'level as a fourth subject and, even after being awarded the school's art prize, the careers advice was to look to study an English course at university.

Similarly, her mother had also enjoyed art at school, but her parents had strongly encouraged her to follow English, which she did through her teaching. But, at the back of her mind, there was always that niggling feeling that she had missed out with her art. So, when it came to Rebecca's tertiary education, her mum strongly supported her decision to follow art. She was awarded a distinction on her foundation course and went on to study MA Fine Art at Edinburgh University. It shaped the artist she is today; there, they were taught to draw or paint life models up to three times every week.

Following her MA, she was torn between her love of creativity and enjoying working with people and fell into branding and advertising. There followed a successful 10-year career. Becoming a mother several years ago gave her the chance to readdress what she really wanted from life and the chance to re-find her creativity once again. ►





Working on a  
Sunday, oil on  
linen, 2022,  
60x70x4.5cm

R.L. Hollon



## HOW I WORK HOW I PAINT

### **I have always been drawn to people.**

I am very aware of the viewer's relationship with the people in my work. We cannot help but relate to figurative work more than any other genre; we are human; they are human. We interact with figures every day, and they with us; as a viewer, we cannot switch off all that learning and habit. We are conditioned to be accustomed to having an active relationship with a person. Whether we are subconsciously empathising with the model, 'judging' them or creating a story around them, we relate to the person depicted. Capturing someone's portrait effectively is to capture something specific to them, so that people who don't know them, feel like they do. A portrait painting acts as a mini time-capsule; how someone is, right now.

### **At the end of my degree, my work was mostly in graphite.**

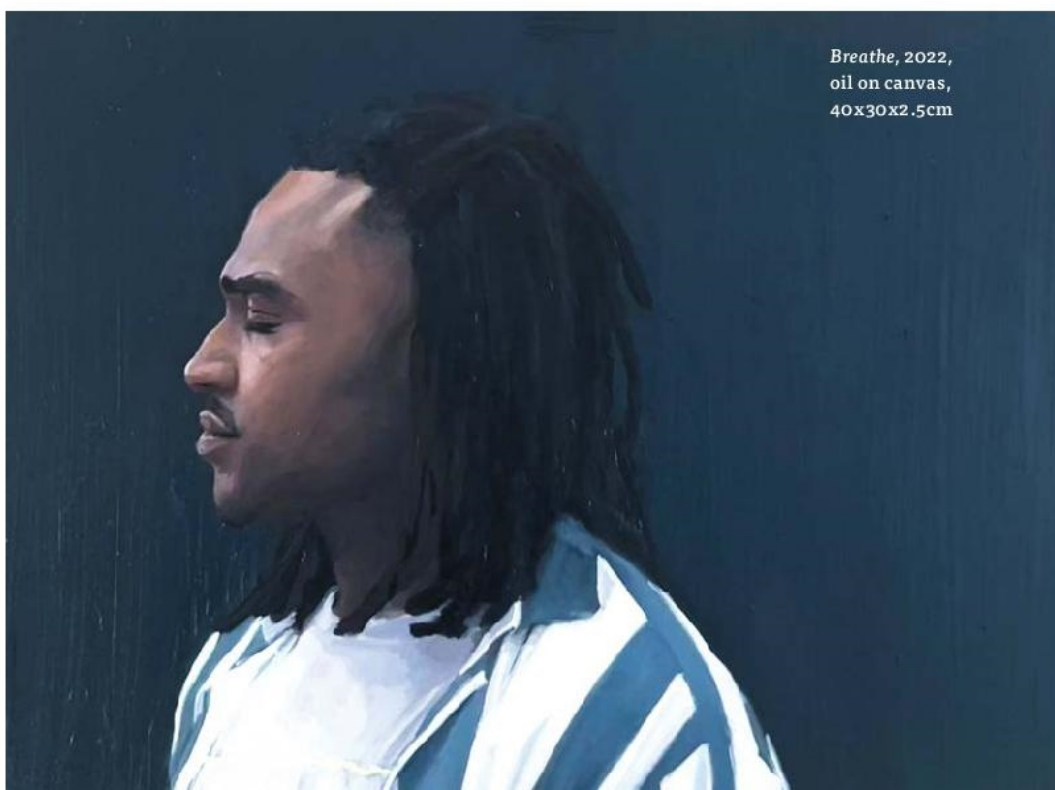
It has always been about the figure and its presence, but at the time I was interested in pairing down a person's detail to very minimal line; reducing and removing additional information which I didn't see adding to their core individuality or the drawing's narrative. To me, the art of capturing convincing and accurate volume without the need for tone in drawing is a challenge I enjoyed. When I first came back full-time to art in 2018, this was where I picked up. You can see this in my drawings within *The Commute* section of my upcoming solo show. They were created in 2018. They show a series of London commuters I crossed paths with on buses and tubes around the city.

### **I painted *Self Portrait in Lockdown* (above, right) in 2021, the first self-portrait I have painted in 20 years.**

I wanted to capture the uneasiness of this strange time and did not feel my best. I also found the process of painting a self-portrait uncomfortable, and hence I am painted shielding my eyes. This action both semi-protected me from the viewer's gaze, but also, as a viewer, means you have to peer closely to try to see what my face is – or isn't – prepared to share. I believe additional details in the portrait add to the feeling of unease; the internal spotlight is harsh, bleaching my right hand and the crop very close; my hair is tied back and wispy, and my fringe is uneven; it needs a cut. I found I wore brighter colours during lockdown, in hindsight, perhaps that was to compensate for the bleakness of the situation and winter season. The bright red cardigan I am wearing is in direct contrast to the muted turquoise of the wall. The painting was



*Self Portrait in Lockdown*, 2021, oil on linen, 30x23x2.5cm



*Breathe*, 2022, oil on canvas, 40x30x2.5cm



*Fragile*, 2022,  
oil on linen,  
70x75x2.5cm

**My day starts with dropping the children early at school. I then grab a coffee and head straight to the studio.**

[illegible][illegible]



*Escape*, 2022,  
oil on linen,  
46x36x2cm



*Disappear*, 2022,  
oil on linen,  
70x35x2.5cm







*Street, 2022,*  
oil on linen,  
60x70x4.5cm



*East London*  
Line, graphite  
on heavy  
hot-pressed  
watercolour  
paper, 32x46cm

session will normally last at least two to three hours – possibly up to lunch – although I tend to lose track of time when I'm properly concentrating. Painting is one of the only things that truly absorbs me. After admin and lunch, I'll embark on a second painting session; the first work will be drying on the rack ready for the next layer in the next couple of days. The afternoon session will be working on a different painting, often at a very different stage too.

By mid-afternoon, I'll normally need a break from painting although, in the past, I have been so absorbed that I've forgotten to collect the children!

**I won Green and Stone's Michael Harding first prize for oil painting last summer, and afterwards I had a coffee with the gallery owner.**

At the end of the coffee, we'd agreed that I would have a solo exhibition the following year. The exhibition is called *Returning to London*. I am a Londoner; I have lived in London for over fifteen years. However, in the middle of this time, between 2011 and 2017, my husband's job took us to Asia. Returning to London after six years of living abroad made me look at the city differently. Yes, I re-appreciated the fantastic history, beautiful architecture, plethora of museums, theatres and stunning art galleries. But I also noticed the smaller nuances in everyday life, that I'd previously missed, or simply taken for granted. London acts as a magnet, attracting people with a range of different stories and backgrounds. We cannot help but share experiences whilst we are here.



*Edge, 2022,*  
oil on linen,  
65x50x4.5cm

No matter how mundane, the sharing of routine, of experience, of our city, helps bond us to each other.

**I think one of the most useful modules that should be offered on an art course is about how to run a business.**

A full-time artist is also a business entrepreneur, so you have to know how to market, price your work, and be prepared to get out and about meeting

people and talking about it. Before you take the plunge to becoming a professional artist, read up about how to set up and run a small art business to give yourself the confidence on how to approach it – and then jump right in.

*Returning to London* will be exhibited at the Green and Stone gallery from November 28th and December 3rd.  
[rebeccaholton.com](http://rebeccaholton.com) □



# Jim Ford

**JIM FORD** is a painter, designer and sculptor based in Milwaukee. His exciting collage paintings are a fusion of modern and contemporary abstraction which are activated with humour, culture and movement. *Niki Browes* finds out more



**G**ROWING UP IN THE CHICAGO SUBURBS in a working-class family, Jim Ford learned early on that, if you wanted something, you had to work hard for it. His father passed away unexpectedly when he was in college, an event which had a dramatic effect on his life and future. Before, he was a self-proclaimed troublemaker; after his Dad died, he felt like his second life had begun. Rather than go off the rails, the experience made him incredibly driven in his work, which in turn helped him cope with his grief whilst also being a tool to help him move forward with his life. He worked and studied hard, eventually learning how to make something from nothing.

He believes that art is a vehicle to adventure and wonder. In each of his pieces, he strives to master the art of storytelling in his own visual language. His diverse compositions often centre around taboos, inside jokes, beliefs, phenomena and social commentary, whilst also autobiographical and personal. A draftsman by trade, he likes to paint at night or in the evening, when the world is quiet and most people have gone home. ►





*Untitled (The  
Ferrari)*  
Vehicles of Colour  
series, 2019,  
acrylic on canvas,  
183x153cm





## THE BIG INTERVIEW

**In my eyes, collage is synonymous with punk rock culture, which is how I got into it.**

It can be fast, rebellious, aggressive, edgy and raw. I started practising collage haphazardly, as an illustration technique which I mostly used to make gig posters for bands. My art practice began to develop from this. When I made a good collage back then, it felt like stealing something – and getting away with it! Those are the romantic roots of collage for me.

**I was trained in traditional and digital illustration, drafting and so forth.**

We don't think of letters and typography as abstract, but when you draw them, you are always dealing with form, shape and space. It's much like sculpture, but more technical. My collage and artwork became more abstract when I stopped making gig posters and album covers for bands. Ultimately, finding my voice as an artist has been a process of unlearning; abandoning my training and rigidity in search of something natural and fluid.

**Type design is a very black-and-white art.**

While spending some years focused on mastering this black-and-white form, I developed an insatiable appetite for colour. So, I made art and music in my spare time, and that eventually grew into an art practice. Personally, I think that colour is synesthetic and symbolic for everyone. At least subconsciously, as it's associated with our emotions and natural instincts. I'm obsessed with it, so it's always a central thought in making new work.

**I'm drawn to abstraction because I want to understand form in a very universal way and personalise it to reflect my own taste and vision.**

And I feel that I can integrate my design, musical and artistic sensibilities into creating works that are unique. Abstraction allows me to make use of my impulses and assign symbolic value at will, to be authentic in my work.

**When I started painting with materials, they were often sentimental items like old clothing, objects, heirlooms and personal effects.**

Now I collect and stock the materials that I like to work with in abundance. For instance, I'm partial to fabrics with geometric patterns, which activate like a mechanism in my collage paintings. My work is somewhat influenced by Postwar Art and mid-century



*Hall Pass, (2018),  
mixed media on  
canvas, 183x153cm*

modern design, so I like to source vintage Life magazines for my collage work. When I need more saturation or a different palette, I turn to newer fashion titles.

**In the years before I started showing my work, I was thinking laterally and dabbling in different directions, testing ideas and developing technique.**

My early work was like a survey of modern painting, drawing from Cubism to Neo-Expressionism and everything in between. Crossing the lines, blending styles, failing and sometimes succeeding. The work that I'm doing presently – at any given time – is really striving for the work that I'd like to do in the future. I'm continually planting seeds, so to speak. Even if I do stay in my lane, there is plenty of flexibility to grow and innovate within it.

**When I feel limited or challenged, I can't wait to learn.**

*Chap At The Pub  
Extras series, 2019,  
acrylic and collage  
on canvas,  
92x122cm*





**RIGHT**  
*Intergalactic, Space  
 Trash series, 2022,*  
 acrylic and  
 collage on  
 canvas,  
 76cm



**BELOW** *Dragon  
 In Blue, collage  
 sculpture with  
 playing cards,*  
 (2019), 33x33cm



I'm impatient and obsessively studious because I have a vision to realise. So I decided to undertake my own sculpture education over the last few years. Learning by doing is the name of the game. When you follow instructions or take a class, you learn to do as others do, for better or worse. When I go searching on my own [by trial and error], I have to find my way or make a new way. You fail a lot at first, and no one's around to give you the answers. Sooner or later, you arrive or stumble on something; that elusive breakthrough, that changes everything.

**Although it looks like a messy workshop most of the time, my studio is actually more of a shrine or sacred temple, at least in my imagination.**

What makes it such are elements of Feng Shui, thoughtful alignments, candles, music and meaningful and functional aesthetics. I think like an architect, so my studio is an example of how to blend art and life. This is a ►





**ABOVE** *Orbit*, (2019), mixed media on canvas, 183x122cm

**LEFT** *The Source, Bandwidth paintings*, 2021, acrylic and fabric on canvas, 102x76cm

**RIGHT** *Living In The Why Between What Is Horizons series*, 2020, collage on paper, 36x28cm

## I believe in doing the best you can with what you have; that's how I was raised

place where I can be myself and be with the guardian spirits of art. My ideal workspace is magical and inspiring, while also being utilitarian and efficient.

**Aside from the workspace, I have a lounge/gallery area featuring a variety of my work.**

This reminds me of all that I have to draw from, creatively and in terms of media. I like to think, write and study here when I'm waiting for paint to dry. There's a great conversation happening between these unrelated works. It helps me make connections within my work and gives me a sense of direction. I love it when people visit the space and their eyes light up.

**I always believed in doing the best you can with what you have.**

That's how I was raised and the motto has endured. With that in mind, I think that success as an artist, or for anyone, is finding contentment in what you have and not needing more. My name on the door is the first thing I see that inspires me. It's what I started with. It's my dad's good name and I've spent my entire career making it count. I'm just a Midwest boy trying to make his parents proud, *doing the best I can with what I have*.

**For some years, I've wanted to escape influence, or I didn't want to be influenced more than I already am.**

I think qualities in people are influential to me, so I have had many heroes since I was a little boy, in various fields of art and entertainment. My bookshelf is telling; if only I could show you. Art experiences in my life have been very influential as well: memories

of visiting art museums and such. I don't feel that I ever need inspiration, but the profound experiences sure leave a mark in my memory.

**Artists want to grow and be challenged, it's more social than economic.**

We all want to stop hustling and feel the magic of life, whether we know it or not. As an artist in this time, it's easy to get caught up in the demands of the art market or the pressures of social media. But success is autonomy; it's the freedom to choose.

**I want people around me to feel good and welcome, so I guess I wish my art has the same effect.**

I admire how stand-up comedians deliver the absurd truth that people wish they could say. I like it when people read my painting titles and laugh or smile. I want my viewers to feel





like children, albeit with exceptional taste [laughs]. Inquisitive, curious, and inspired; at best, my art should leave you thinking. They are often riddles, and I rarely disclose the answers. As soon as you know or understand something, you move on and the experience is over.

**I have highly active times and periods of suffering, depression, breakdown and even burnout on occasion.**

It's all cyclical, but I rebuild, reinvent and pick up the pieces. My priorities and moods can change like the weather. In fact, some of my work is becoming seasonal. In the Summer I like to ride motorcycles, listen to loud music and soak up the sun, painting and making sculptures in my underwear, you know? And in the long, cold winters, I split time between the studio and the office, listening to more

jazz and designing typefaces when art shows aren't happening so much. It's wonderful having a flexible schedule and doing passionate work, but difficult keeping up two careers. A lot of people have the impression that I don't need any help, but that's far from the truth.

**I sometimes wonder if I'll outgrow painting when there's nothing left to explore or express with the medium.**

Often I am storing a massive amount of work, and I don't quite have the demand or space to paint nonstop. I can only do it so long as it's an effective means of expression. I need to project the thoughts behind the painting, its philosophy or statement. The physical artwork is an abstract representation of that. Painting can wait, thoughts and ideas cannot. They need a vehicle.

**Although I wish we didn't need it so much, social media deserves credit.**

I'm somewhat reclusive as an artist or conditioned in that way, so Instagram has been instrumental for me. When I'm making work, I feel grateful for my supporters, peers and friends on social media. I don't want to let them down.

**Success can be a choice though, as all artists know, it's incredibly hard to guarantee in art.**

I think it's helpful to have other sources of income, so your art isn't driven by the market or your bank balance. At the very least, believe in yourself and your work. Take the first step, and keep going, keep growing. Belief is a superpower, so you've got to have faith.

[jimfordstudios.com](http://jimfordstudios.com) □





Quentin Blake at  
work on the walls of the  
House of Illustration,  
pen, ink and  
watercolour,  
37x47cm

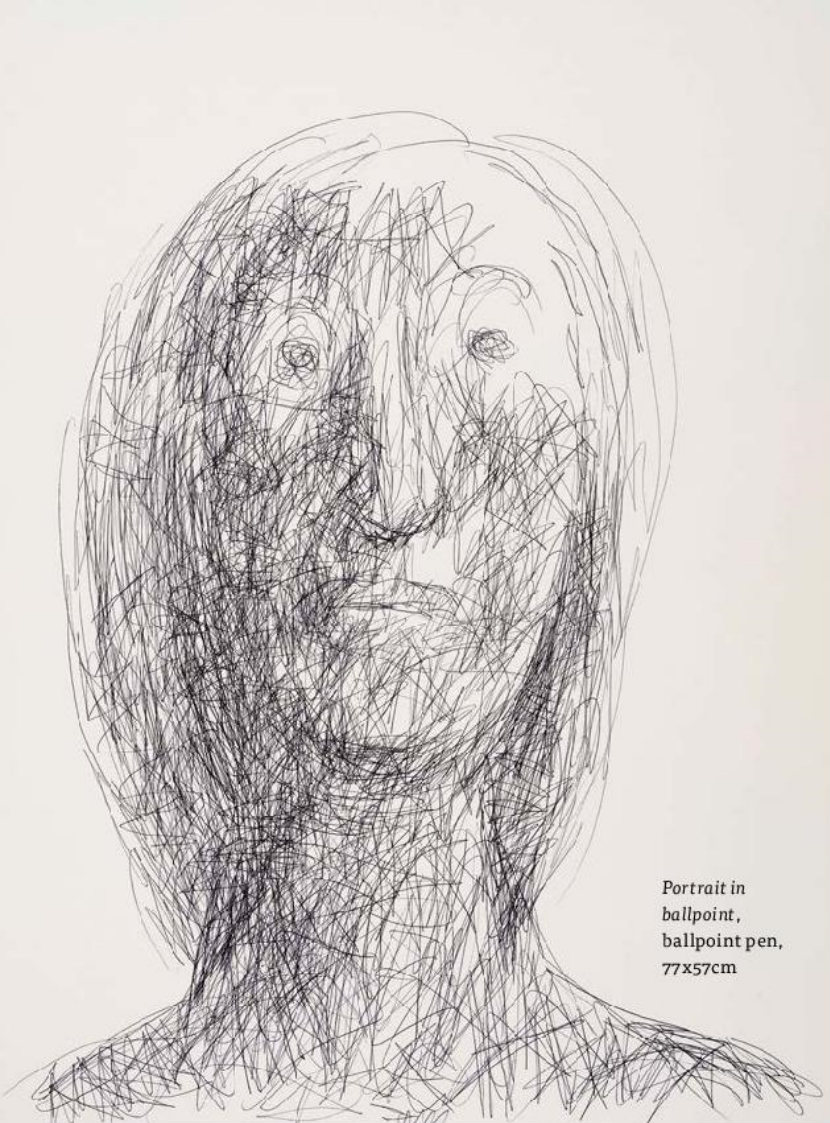




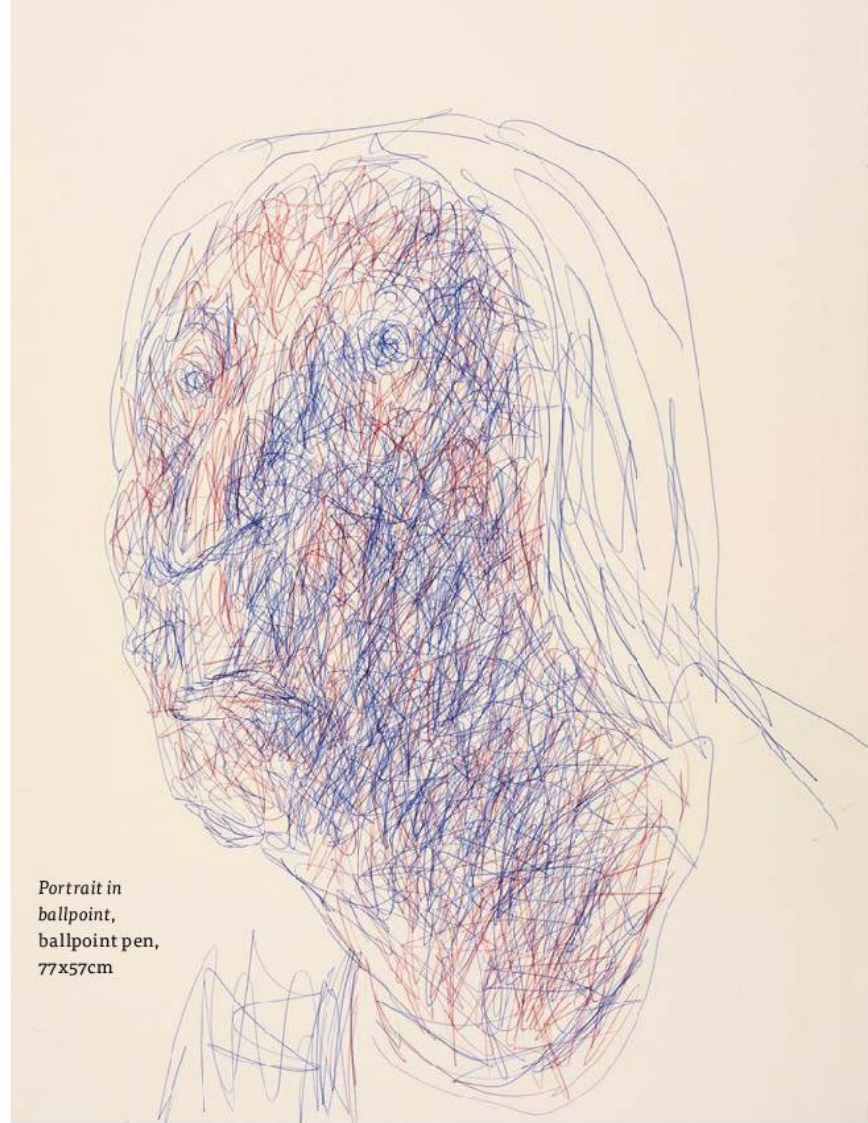
# Celebrating Quentin at Blake 90

As he approaches his ninetieth year, the English cartoonist, caricaturist, illustrator and children's writer has no plans for slowing down, says *Amanda Hodges* ►

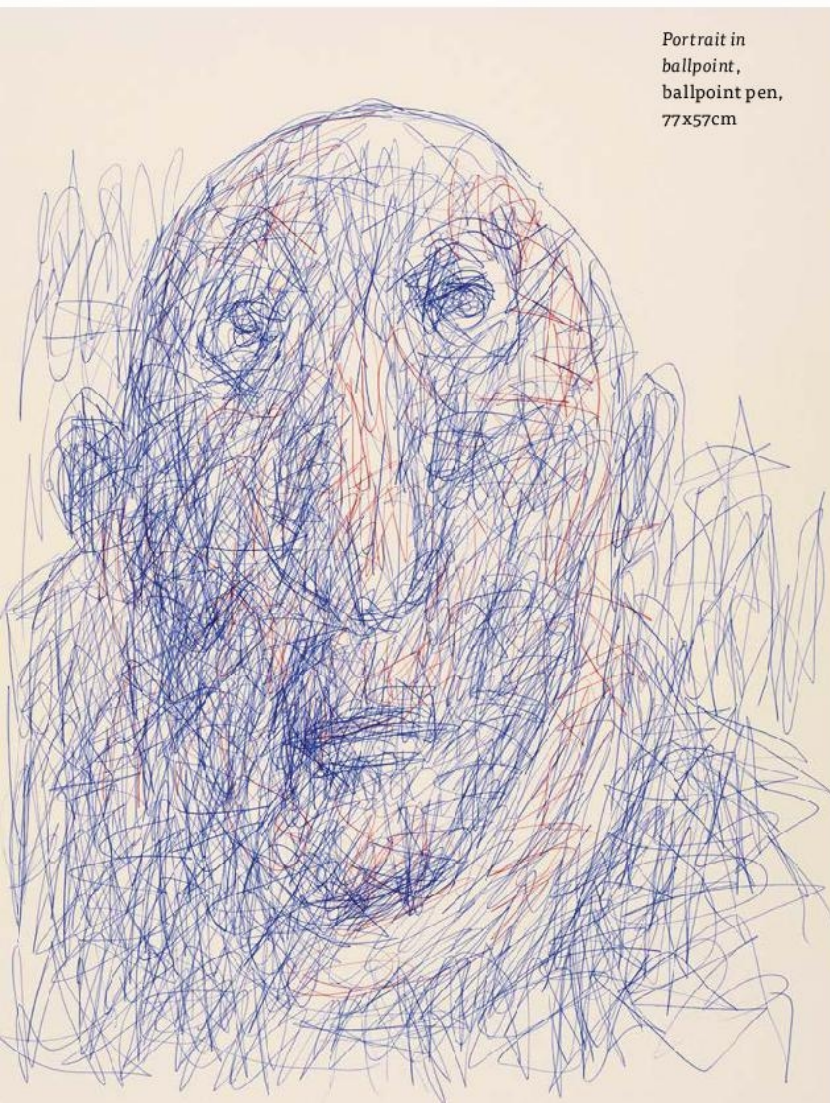




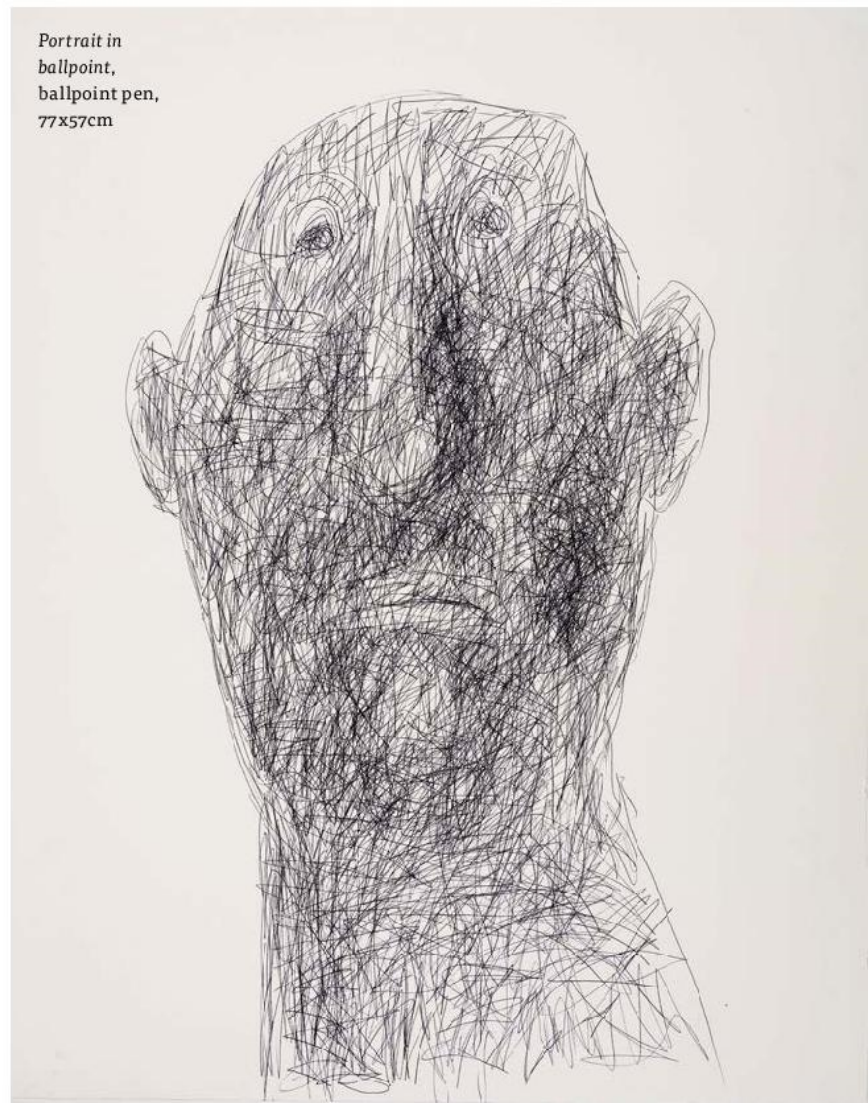
Portrait in  
ballpoint,  
ballpoint pen,  
77x57cm



Portrait in  
ballpoint,  
ballpoint pen,  
77x57cm



Portrait in  
ballpoint,  
ballpoint pen,  
77x57cm



Portrait in  
ballpoint,  
ballpoint pen,  
77x57cm



**D**ELICIOUSLY SCRAWLY, FREQUENTLY JOYFUL and always utterly distinctive, Quentin Blake's drawings have enlivened many classics of children's literature, from Roald Dahl's *The BFG* and *Matilda* to modern stories *Mr Stink* and *The Boy in the Dress* by David Walliams.

In 2021, Blake's *Mr Filkins in the Desert* saw a man, approaching his 90th birthday, embark upon a long-distance celebration. Despite obstacles, Mr Filkins achieves his goal, perhaps a metaphor for Blake's own enduring artistic vibrancy. As he's acknowledged online, "Not many men celebrate their 90th by crossing a desert but for me, it's an excuse to draw fantastic landscapes and creatures. That's what it's really all about. Although you'll notice there's also a moral about being nice to other people."

Herein lies much of Blake's enduring appeal as an illustrator. He may be almost a nonagenarian but, with his wonderfully anarchic spirit and wry humour, there's always a palpable sense of energy, purposefully looking ahead rather than behind. His natural sympathy for the marginalised and all who struggle is one of the qualities distinguishing his illustrations, quite apart from their flair. It's what David Walliams, in *The Drawing Of My Life*, the recent BBC Blake documentary, perceives as his compassion with those on the fringes of society: "He's got an incredible eye for the outsider and I think perhaps he's drawn to those stories and those characters more than any others."

When you look at Blake's body of work, from early sketches for *Punch* and *The Spectator* to later solo ventures as a children's illustrator and then collaborations with many authors, most prominently Roald Dahl, you can see the truth of this; the range of work is breathtaking but there's always an underlying sympathy for the underdog. Birds feature heavily too, their sheer vivacity perhaps the appeal; one recent story, *Loveykins* even features Augustus the bird as a surrogate baby, its goggle eyes staring out of a pram wheeled by his smitten owner.

Quentin Saxby Blake was born on 16th December 1932 in Sidcup, Kent. With no art tradition at home – his father a civil servant, his mother a housewife – all knowledge was gleaned from school. Influenced by French caricaturist Honoré Daumier, he had a sketch published by *Punch* during his teens. This bolstered his dreams of becoming an illustrator although, eschewing time at art school, he read English at Cambridge. "I



From the series 'Moonlight Travellers', quill, ink and watercolour, 30x57cm



Cover illustration for 'Mr Filkins in the Desert', pen, ink and watercolour, 58x39cm

don't regret that because learning to read books has a lot to do with what I've done ever since. What makes being an illustrator so interesting is that different authors take you into different situations and the fundamental collaboration is with the words, with the story." But, all importantly, he attended life classes regularly for two years and says this discipline bestowed a firm foundation for future drawing, "I just feel I know what happens. It may not be anatomically perfect, but it comes out of the imagination, or unconscious observations of the past."

Initially, Blake wrote for various markets, taught at the Royal College of Art then, keen

to see his drawings in sequence, asked friend John Yeoman to write the book which became *A Drink of Water*. Early illustrations were in black and white or limited colour but in 1968's *Patrick*, Blake explored the colour palette in its infinite richness, conjuring the tale of a young boy whose magic violin transforms everything when he plays. His illustrations, pulsating off the page with life, have always been instantly recognisable. And his willingness to experiment keeps him accessible, his *Angel Pavement* (2004) even using a tri-coloured magic pencil in its depiction of teenage angels helping an aspiring pavement artist.

Writer Jenny Uglow, in her new study *The* ▶



## ANNIVERSARY

Quentin Blake Book rightly identifies this as his signature effervescence, saying, "He is an artist with a powerful imagination." Often conjuring scenes in his head or making faces as he sketches, "with a pencil anything is possible: cockatoos in the kitchen, a giant in sandals, an artist drawing in the air; his scratchy, leaping figures are the handwriting of a friend. Magic lies in the fluid line and he can prick pomposity like a balloon."

Blake never worries if watercolour escapes the outline of his drawings as this captures movement so well; he can convey mood with just a few choice lines; fluidity essential to his art. As David Walliams notices, his tools are fundamentally simple, "A piece of paper and a scratchy ink pen [he favours dip pens and the use of a lightbox] and even though there's not necessarily a huge amount of detail in terms of background, he captures the truth of a character," and this is the essence of his talent.

Clown portrays a toy who comes to life, lack of narrative balanced by wonderfully vivid imagery capturing philanthropic adventures. *Mister Magnolia* again relies on spectacular colour for effect, Magnolia wearing only one boot, giving children infinite scope for rhyme. Poet Michael Rosen, with whom Blake worked on the acclaimed *Sad Book* (poignantly charting Rosen's personal grief) says, "Often in Quentin's work there's an element of performance and art that enables people to enjoy things. Mister Magnolia is expressing himself through dance, that's why he doesn't mind having one boot. Quentin's saying there's a wonderful power in art to cure, to heal and to help."

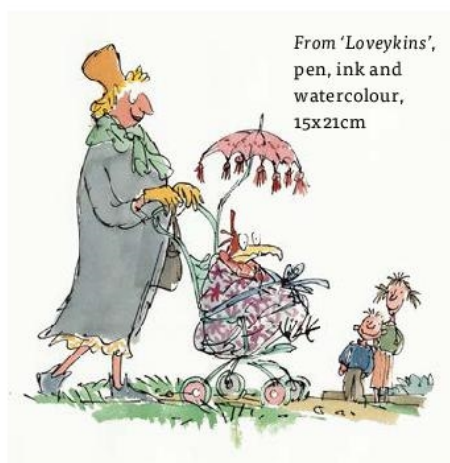
This element is always visible in his work; even in his long-term collaboration with Dahl, he brought lightness and playfulness into a potentially grotesque territory. With a skilful touch, one sees the terrifying bulk of Mrs Trunchbull towering over Matilda or a harder pen nib capturing the 'lavatory brush' beard of Mr Twit. Dahl's widow, Felicity, says that Blake's "pencil contained magic," and the men had a strong creative partnership.

In recent years, Blake's focus has shifted subtly with more ostensibly melancholy, often larger-scale canvases, such as the extraordinary thirty-foot *Taxi Driver* mural, "An epic in monochrome tones" as Hastings Contemporary director Liz Gilmore describes the work depicting modern dislocation at the heart of a pre-Pandemic exhibition. Blake acknowledges, "We do live in worrying times," but with customary optimism adds, "the scene may be gloomy but the life is in the drawing, you hope there's energy in the way you do it."

He's extended his ideas of the remedial



From 'Mister Magnolia',  
pen, ink, watercolour  
and Conte crayon,  
23x28cm



From 'Loveykins',  
pen, ink and  
watercolour,  
15x21cm

power of art by designing a huge fabric mural which disguised a derelict building opposite St Pancras, an empowering mural for older residents of a mental health centre (drawn having ageless fun in the treetops), drawings for a young person's eating disorder unit and many other healthcare projects. "I've found things to explore that I wasn't able to do before, it's partly age I suppose," he says.

New opportunities remain welcome. Recently at Hastings Contemporary, there was an exhibition of faces drawn entirely by biro ballpoint pen, the simple immediacy delighting Blake's sense of artistry. Now, movement's again afoot with the House of Illustration finding new premises in Islington, the opening of which is planned for 2024. "We wanted this building, devoted to illustration, for some time. The fact it's actually happening is almost unbelievable. Illustration," he says, "doesn't get so noticed because it's not fine art but it's a language which everybody understands. People may not think they're looking at art, but it's having the effect on them of art."

Retirement is unthinkable for Blake and apparently, his birthday plans will simply see him drawing happily in his studio. At 90, he remains full of new ideas and potential projects. As Claudia Zeff of the House of Illustration says, "Drawing is like breathing for him; it's what he does."

[quentinblake.com](http://quentinblake.com) □





Cover illustration for  
'Clown', pen, ink and  
watercolour,  
32x44cm



EXHIBITION

# Dame Barbara

**THIS PAGE** Barbara Hepworth at Trewyn Studio, St Ives in 1957 with *Stringed Figure (Curlew)* [Version II] 1956  
**RIGHT** *Curved Stone with Yellow*, 1946





# ra Hepworth



Originated by the Hepworth Wakefield, the new **DAME BARBARA HEPWORTH** exhibition at Tate St Ives will have a special focus on Hepworth's life in her beloved Cornwall, bringing together many of her most important works, says *Niki Browes* ►





**D**AME BARBARA HEPWORTH WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST SCULPTORS and artists of the twentieth century. Unlike her friend and contemporary, Henry Moore – whose sculpture remains close to the human figure – she decided that representation was not the aim of sculpture and she became one of the first British sculptors to make completely non-representational works. Yet, for many, the wraithlike Dame Barbara was the artist who put the hole in modern sculpture, who introduced emptied space as an element in her compositions and made it her signature. The event occurred in 1931, when, in a flash of daring (for which she was renowned) she pierced a hole in a small carving to give the

figure a sense of flow and lead the viewer's eye around it. "When I first pierced a shape, I thought it was a miracle," she recalled. "A new vision was opened."

From then on, she carved or chiselled holes in virtually all her sculptures, as if to disclose their inner structural natures. Sometimes she painted the hollows; sometimes she bound the sides with a cat's cradle of wire or string, funnelling and trapping light and creating infinite lattices of shadow.

Many of Dame Barbara's sculptures – in wood, stone and metal – were huge, such as *Single Form*, a 21-foot, five-ton bronze memorial to Dag Hammarskjöld that rises from a pool at the United Nations Secretariat Building in New York. Each of her works was infused with the conception of her art, about

which she held decided opinions. Summing these up, she said in noting the predominant influence of landscape on her creativity: "Sculpture is a three-dimensional projection of primitive feeling: touch, texture, size and scale, hardness and warmth, evocation and compulsion to move, live and love. Landscape is strong: it has bones and flesh, and skin and hair. It has age and history and a principle behind its evolution." It was this passion that gave Dame Barbara's sculptures their warmth and sensuousness. Even when their scale was massive, they conveyed a sense of intimacy and energy that draws viewers to them.

Dame Barbara was an intensely personal craftsman, for whom total mood was important. "It's riot strength," she said, alluding to her own slight frame and ability





Spring, 1966

TATE © BOWNESS PHOTO © KRISTIN PRISK



Spring (Project for Sculpture), 1957

© BOWNESS IMAGE © TATE

to sculpt such mammoth pieces. "It's rhythm. The strokes of the hammer on the chisel have to be in time with your heartbeat or pulse. It's like a Mozart piece. You wake up and suddenly the whole composition is conceived."

Born in Wakefield in 1903, Hepworth grew up surrounded by the dramatic landscape of Yorkshire. She famously stated that all of her early memories were of "forms and shapes and textures. Moving through and over the West Yorkshire landscape with my father in his car, the hills were sculptures; the roads defined the form." From school, the 16-year-old went to the Leeds School of Art and then to the Royal College of Art in London, where she won a travelling fellowship in 1924 that took her to Italy. In Rome, she was the pupil of the master carver Ardini, who taught her ►

Pelagos, 1946



© BOWNESS PHOTO © TATE (MATT GREENWOOD)



Epidauros II, 1961



© BOWNESS. IMAGE © TATE PHOTOGRAPHY

how to work in marble. It was he who suggested to her that “marble changes colour under different people’s hands.” While in Italy, she married John Rattenbury Skeaping, a fellow British sculptor. Two years later, Dame Barbara came upon the paintings of Ben Nicholson, which she recognised as an equivalent to her aims in sculpture. And when her marriage to Mr. Skeaping ended, she became, in 1933, Mr. Nicholson’s wife (they divorced in 1951).

Despite the Hepworth Wakefield museum residing in her home county, Dame Barbara is strongly associated with St Ives, Cornwall. In August 1939, along with her young triplets and husband, she left London, due to the threat of bombings, for the sanctuary of the coastal Cornish town. She found the rough, craggy coastline of Cornwall a constant source of revelation saying, “I have gained very great inspiration from the Cornish land and seascape, the horizontal line of the sea and the quality of light and colour which reminds me of the Mediterranean light and colour which so excites one’s sense of form; and first and last there is the human figure which in the country becomes a free and moving part of a greater whole. This relationship between

## She found the rough, craggy coastline of Cornwall a constant source of revelation

figure and landscape is vitally important to me. I cannot feel it in a city.”

Dressed in baggy corduroys and a sheepskin jacket (to ward off the infamous Cornish chill), she spent hours watching the waves or studying the geometry of seashells. *Pelagos* depicts the sea’s horizon enfolded by the arms of the land. The sea is also represented in *Tides*, a plane wood shape whose hollowed interior is coloured in contrast to the polished grain of its sides.

Today, it’s impossible to visit St Ives and not be made aware of the huge influence Dame Barbara had on the area. In Longstone cemetery, where Hepworth is buried, stands a cast of her bronze *Ascending Form* (*Gloria*). On the Malakoff (near the railway and bus station) is a bronze cast of *Pierced Form*

(*Epidauros*). Outside the Guildhall in Street-an-Pol is the town’s own *Dual Form* whilst in the library is the Portland stone *Rock Form* (*Penwith*). In the parish church, are candlestick holders and the *Madonna and Child*, a memorial to her son, Paul Skeaping, who served as a pilot with No. 81 Squadron based at Seletar, Singapore; he died in a plane crash in Thailand in 1953. Then, in the Penwith Society’s gallery in Black Road West is a marble carving, *Magic Stone*.

Most impressively, however, is the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, housed in Trewyn Studio where Hepworth lived from 1949 until her death on 25th May 1975 at the age of 72. In her will, she asked the executors to consider “the practicability of establishing a permanent exhibition of some of my works in Trewyn Studio and its garden. She said she envisaged “small sculptures, carvings and drawings on the first floor whilst my working studio being shown as closely as possible as it has in my lifetime... and a few large works in the garden.”

The studio was damaged in the fire that led to Hepworth’s death (thought to have been caused by the lethal combination of lit cigarettes and sleeping pills). Though no ►



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## EXHIBITION

Sculpture with  
Colour (Deep Blue  
and Red), 1940



River Form, 1965

works of art were destroyed, much of the furniture and books were irretrievably damaged. Instead, an impressive attempt has been made to reconstruct something of the feeling Trewyn Studio had in the 1950s when Dame Barbara was living and working there.

The downstairs room houses a special display with images of her at various times during her career along with some of her quotes on art including, "I rarely draw what I see – I draw what I see in my body." Her life story is told via personal photographs, documents and other memorabilia. Upstairs is the studio which contains some of the original furniture, rugs and curtains that Dame Barbara liked. It's also the home to some of her significant work, not least two sculptures that use strings: the elmwood *Landscape Sculpture* and *Stringed Figure* (Curlew), *Version II* in sheet brass.

From the studio, you can go directly into the garden. This is not simply a back garden nor a working space but a stunning extension of Hepworth's creative process. Its exotic planting and location in West Cornwall, with its sub-tropical climate and clear light, linked her to a Mediterranean sensibility. The space is also filled with her sculptures including the stunning round string sculpture, *Spring* and *River Form* (left). The greenhouse contains the artist's impressive collection of cacti whilst original plasters for bronzes are displayed there.

Returning to the studio, you pass the yard where Dame Barbara did most of her carving whilst you can look into the plaster and stone carving workshop, which has been left more or less untouched since the artist's death. You can see artist smocks and Dame Barbara's vast array of tools. All in all, it's a magical, moving and inspiring place to visit.

In 1973, Dame Barbara was interviewed for her 70th birthday. The sculptor, who was by then suffering from throat cancer, remarked, "I'm glad to reach 70. I didn't think I would." Throughout her career, she accumulated an impressive number of prizes, medals and honorary degrees. Her stature was also recognised by the British Government, which created her a Commander of the British Empire in 1958 and a Dame in 1965. Her work changed and evolved over the fifty years of her active career, but it remains a supremely consistent and magnificent achievement, not least for a woman when the very physical practice of making sculpture was dominated by men. She was also a respected pioneer and a powerful and hugely successful presence on the international stage. And for that, we salute her.

*Barbara Hepworth: Art & Life* is on at Tate St Ives from 26th November – 1st May 2023 □

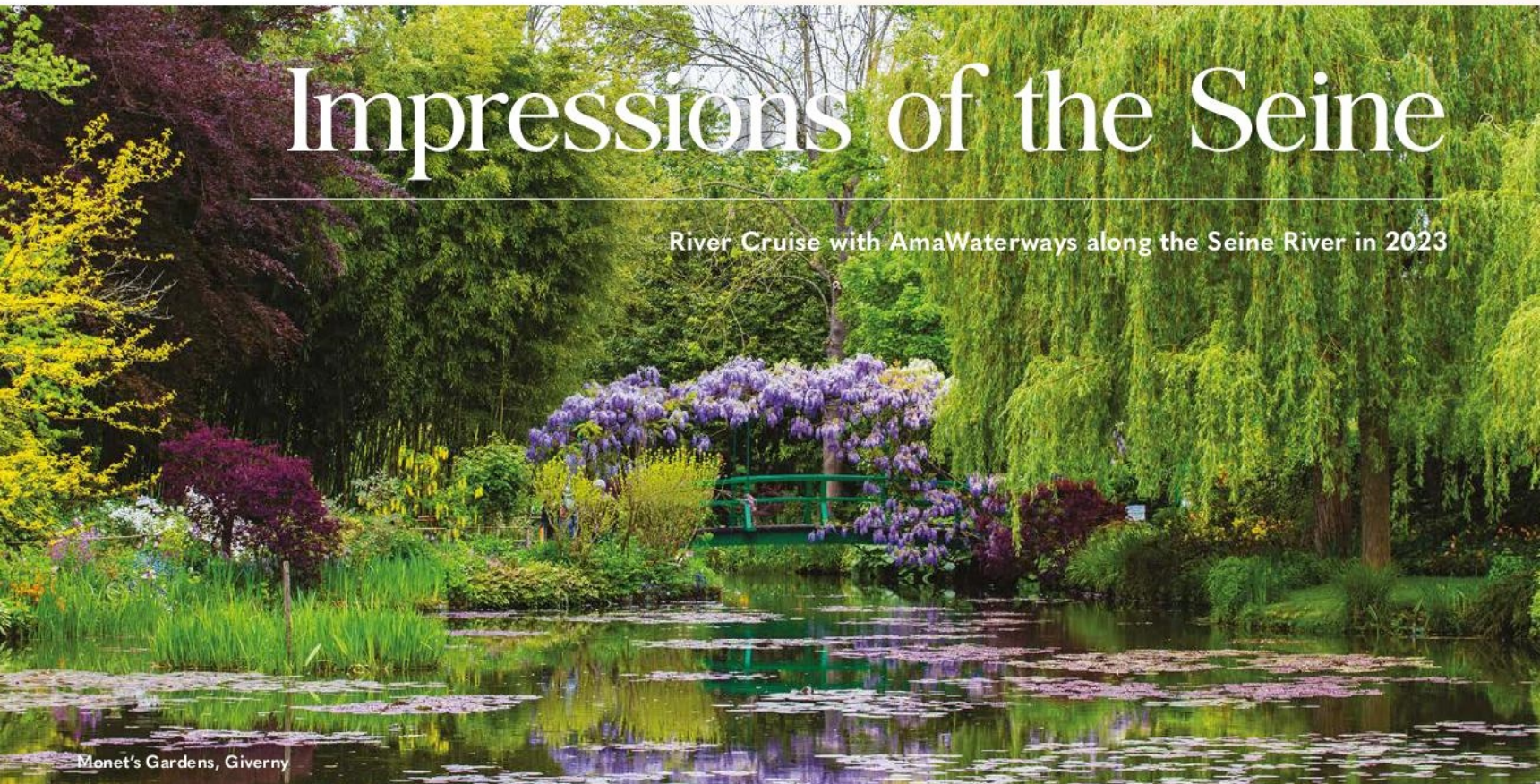
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THE  
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CHOICE AWARD  
WINNER  
2022

# Abigail Waddell

This landscape artist is captivated by clouds which she's portrayed in her painting *Portscatho Beach*, the People's Choice winner of The British Art Prize. *Ramsha Vistro* finds out more

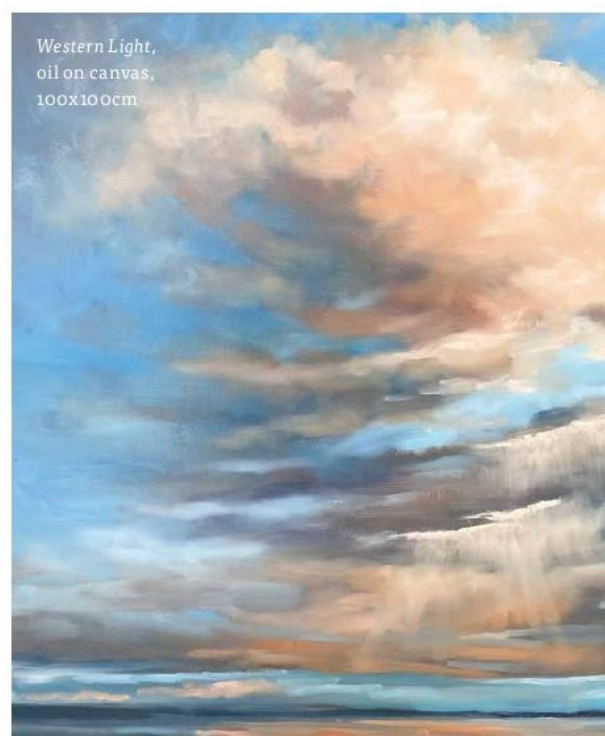
**A**BIGAIL WADDELL WANTED to get over the hurdle of putting her work out to be judged by other artists and peers. She always looked at artists who had won competitions with great awe. And although somehow a win seemed unattainable, she was thrilled with the result of entering her work into The British Art Prize competition.

After 30 years of working as a rheumatologist and medical school lecturer, Abigail now works part-time and spends the rest of her week painting. "We all need something to help us deal with the

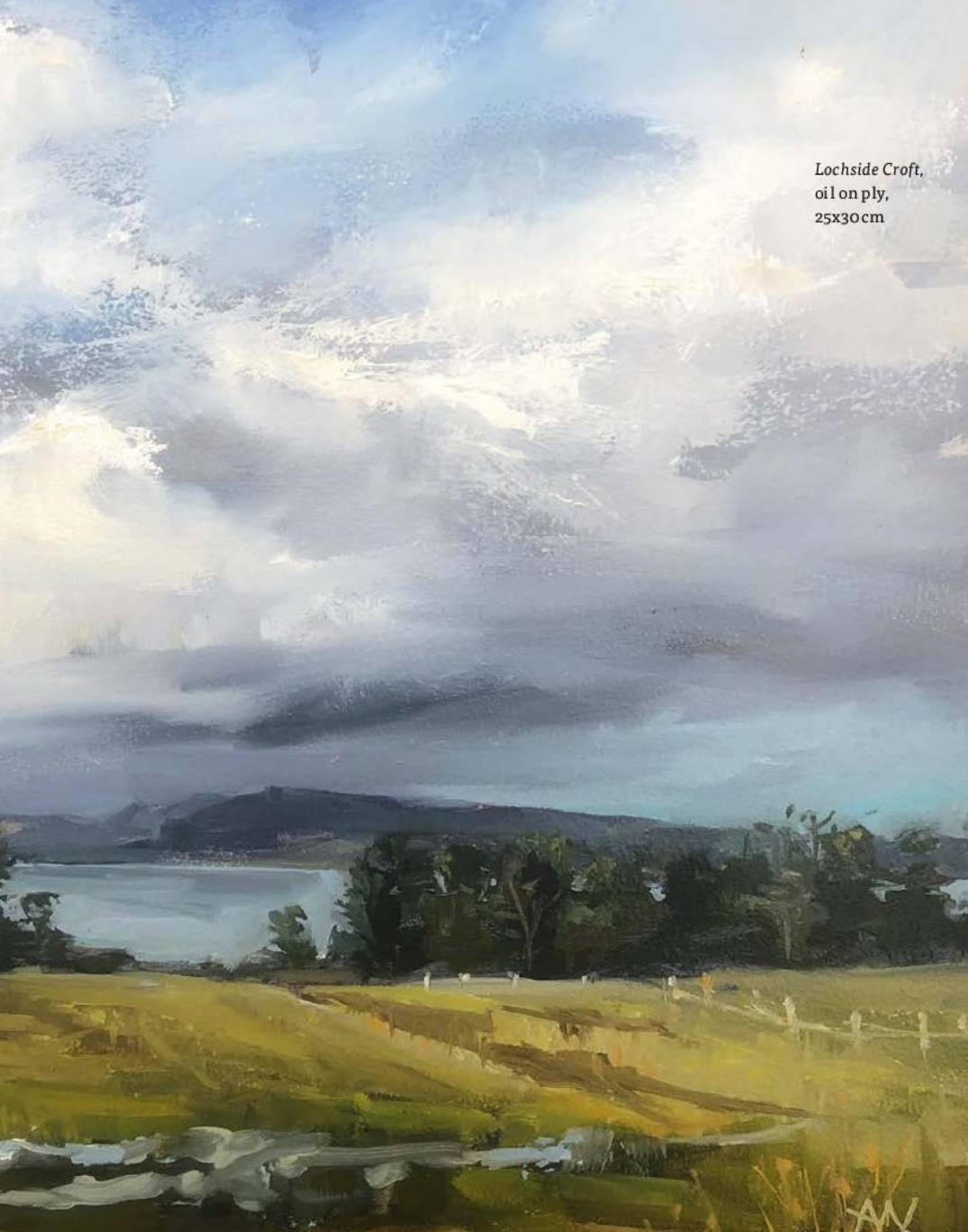
pressures of our chosen professions. In my case, art has helped over the past few years, and I feel unbelievably lucky that it has now become a second career that can run alongside my NHS and tutoring role."

She'd always loved drawing, from a young age. In school, she copied sketches in pen and ink before she went on to create her own. But turning 14 meant no more art at school as she was only allowed a limited number of subjects and wanted to pursue medicine. For 20 years, Abigail focussed solely on her medical career until she started attending a weekly art class which led her to dabble in watercolour and ►









Lochside Croft,  
oil on ply,  
25x30cm

mosaic. "In 2013, I finally found my niche with a painting class in Cheltenham and never looked back."

Abigail describes herself as an enthusiastic, intuitive but slightly chaotic artist who is fascinated by the light and structure of the land. Her preferred subject matters are landscapes and seascapes, especially in and around the Cotswolds, where she lives, as well as in Northwest Scotland, which she visits every year. "I have painted these places so often that the palette and mixing of colours seem to be innate. It's also where I like to be, so if I paint them *en plein air*, I get to spend time there; experience the light, elements and feel of the place. I enjoy translating it all into my painting. I love that the landscape is a permanent feature, but the transience of light in the sky and land changes colours, mood and experience so that there are endless different details to capture."

She credits her love for *en plein air* painting to a former mentor. "I was lucky enough to be mentored over a number of years by Jayne Tricker, a brilliant artist and facilitator who inspired and encouraged me to start painting outside." How would Abigail describe her *en plein air* composition process? "I pack everything I need in a rucksack and squeeze out a limited palette in a paint saver, so I don't need to carry tubes. The panels are pre-painted with a mid-tone and ideally, I do all of this the night before. When I'm there, I try and get a sense of the place, and suss out the lighting and points of interest – preferably a hint at a man-made structure such as a gate or a fence with good light. But I nearly always find more interesting subjects in the sky, so the horizon is usually set low in my paintings."

Abigail aims to achieve the feeling of tranquillity and peace with her artworks. "It's mindful creating the painting; capturing the movement of light on land and in the sky. Almost meditative. I get lost in the moments of mixing paint, capturing a scene, and its light – it's a very calming process and completely different to anything else. Regular painting is part of my life and helps balance the impact of my NHS and teaching work. When I look at my art, I am taken back to that place and state of mind where I can feel the elements and recall the movements of the clouds, and I want to give that feeling to the viewer; take them there or bring the outside into their environment."

Her studio can be found up some stairs, in the corner of a barn, exuding rustic charm with wooden eaves and skylight windows. The downstairs is a communal area full of art books and "more importantly," coffee. ►



Lone Tree,  
oil on gesso board,  
40x50cm

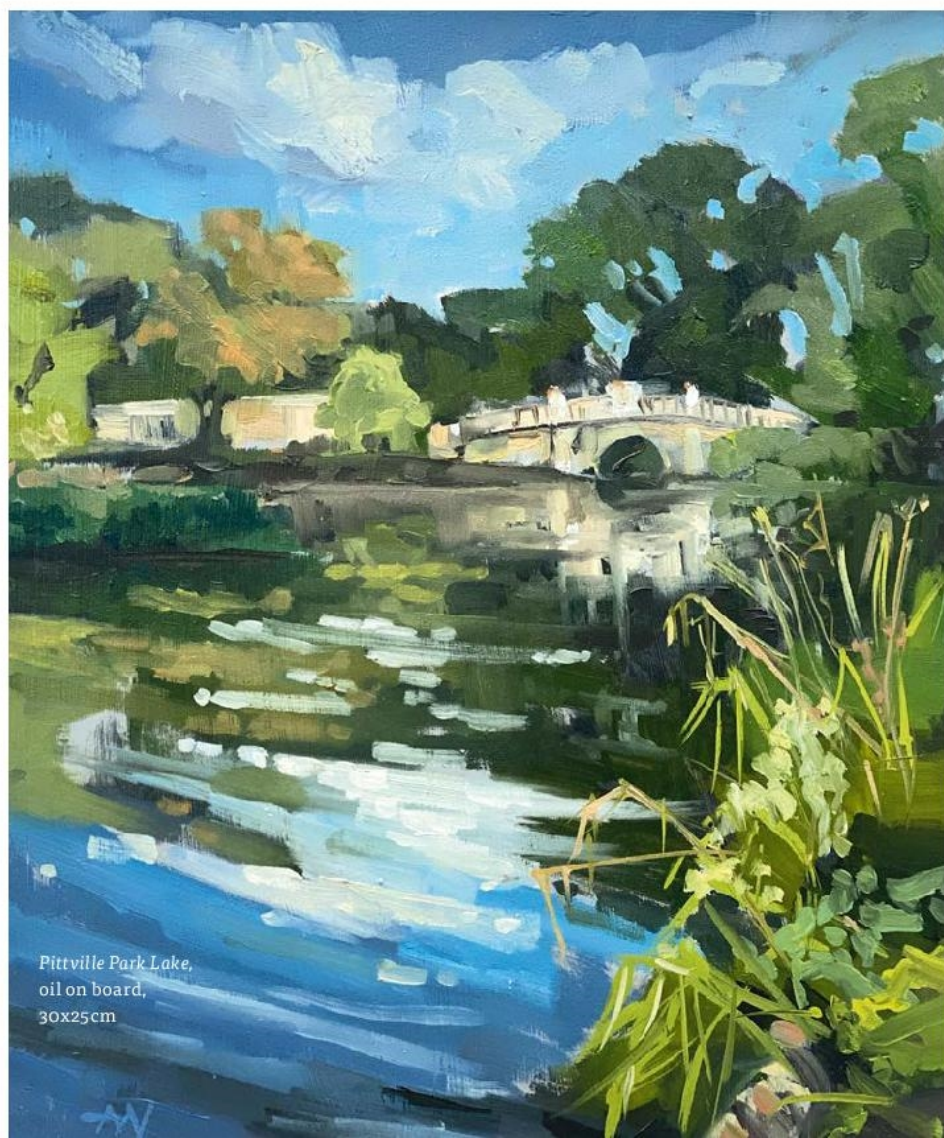




## PEOPLE'S CHOICE WINNER



Autumn light at  
Yanworth,  
oil on ply,  
25x30cm



Pittville Park Lake,  
oil on board,  
30x25cm

"It's a small space on a farm where the owner, also an artist, lives with her family. The converted barn has a space for both me and her, upstairs."

During lockdown, the owner also converted an adjacent stable block into a bright, modern studio that artists can use to host workshops. Abigail uses that space to teach friends and do demos with and for local artists. She plans to expand that side of things further in the future. "It's on rolling farmland by the source of the Thames, so I never need to walk far for inspiration. Plus, I can take my scruffy terrier, Bella with me. I am very lucky."

So, what does a typical studio day look like for Abigail? "I've usually organised what I want to do that week in terms of art. I tend to be fluid on an actual studio day: I walk the dog, arrive sometime in the morning, set out my paints and easel for the painting day before a coffee and catch-up with other artists. Then, I paint. And paint. Maybe I will potter into the fields for a walk with the dog again, or maybe I will pop to the lake for a swim, but I mainly paint. I tend to block other art-related work into weekends so as not to disrupt the flow – this is everything from admin to framing."

Abigail's careers are testimony to the fact that art and science aren't mutually exclusive and she wants to encourage others to follow their artistic passions even if they weren't able to do so earlier in their lives. "There is usually a divide within schools between art and science. But it shouldn't be an either-or thing and we should encourage more breadth in early education. If you missed that – as I did – don't be put off; you can still create and call yourself an artist even if you never managed art school or a formal art education. Of course, you will have different approaches to your work and a different understanding of concepts and reactions to art. I am not suggesting that I have the same understanding as someone who is formally trained. But I do create art, and have finally started to call myself an artist when people ask what I do."

Does her medical career influence her art in any way? "Painting is not all art – there is science in composition and colour mixing is alchemy. Just like medicine is not all science; I would not be the first to suggest the concept of 'the art of medicine.' I need a bit of both in everything I do. I get to use the artist and scientist in me every day. And sometimes, people buy my art, vote for me and even select me for an exhibition. It's great, even if a bit unexpected! I never know where my art will take me next."

[abigailwaddellart.co.uk](http://abigailwaddellart.co.uk) □





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# Coloured pencil portraits *Expanded palettes*

In his final instalment of his series exploring colour pencil portraits, **JAKE SPICER'S** will be looking at an expanded palette of colours

**I**N THIS FINAL INSTALMENT of our series exploring colour pencil portraits, we'll explore an expanded palette of colours, using hues from every part of the spectrum. In the earlier articles of this series, I have focused on limited palettes of colours for two reasons: firstly to show that you don't need to buy a large set of coloured pencils to make a developed portrait and secondly, to use colour in a more versatile and experimental way. Using a red-blue palette can help you to become more sensitive to the warm and cool qualities of skin, a CMYK palette can help you to improve your colour mixing and a complementary palette can encourage you to be more experimental in your non-representational colour choices. In this final article, we'll look at what can be achieved with an expanded palette, with the whole

rainbow of an extensive coloured pencil set at your disposal.

If you have ever looked at the wonderful range of colours in the portrait paintings of Lucian Freud or Jennie Saville and wondered how they can extrapolate a rainbow from the uniform colour of skin then this exercise is for you. While pinks and browns have an understandably prominent showing in the blush of the cheeks and lips, greens and blues provide an important counterpoint to their warmth, showing in blood vessels, chin stubble or around the eyes. Yellows add a glow to the raised forms of the face and lilacs add chroma to its shadows. As you select each colour from your pencil tin, your eye will work harder to match the colour in your hand with colours in the face of your sitter, making it easier to see a variety of hues than if you had picked out a single flesh-tone pencil. ►







# Picking a palette

For this exercise, you will need to select a palette that contains at least one hue from each major colour group in the spectrum. Rather than selecting them all in advance, lay out your full set of coloured pencils and, with your reference or model in front of you, pick the specific hues that seem appropriate to your subject as you draw. In this drawing, I've selected a palette of extremes with pale colours for the skin and deep darks for the hair and collar. You might choose to pick a saturated palette of fauvists blues, reds and greens, or a more muted range of low-chroma colours.



# Step-by-step portrait



## 1 LINE

Begin your drawing with a coloured pencil that can be erased, using a colour that is both pale enough that it doesn't overwhelm later marks and dark enough that it can be clearly seen on the page. I chose a Midnight Blue pencil from the Derwent Procolour range as it is easy to rub out and sits happily beneath the more lightfast pencils that will make up successive layers.

## 2 COOL COLOURS ►

Next, come the cooler colours. As the warmth of flesh is self-evident and the cool greens and blues in the skin are more difficult to see, it is helpful to establish the presence of cooler colours early in a drawing. From this point on all the pencils I used are Derwent Lightfast coloured pencils to ensure the longevity of the drawing. I used Turquoise Green and Mid Ultramarine in the early layers, using the contours of the earlier linear stages to guide the placement of pale, cool swatches.







### ◀ 3 REDS AND ORANGES

Warm colours bring a blush of life into the cheeks and in this stage, you'll be able to pick out the red and orange around the eyes, nose, mouth and ears. As you draw, think about the direction of your marks, sculpting the face with hatching that follows the surface of the skin. I selected two reds for the portrait, one of which tended towards orange and a second that tended towards purple. I used the former – Scarlet – in combination with Flame Orange for this stage, saving the second red for later.



### 4 YELLOWS ▶

Because it is so pale, yellow tints the white of the paper without significantly changing its tone, adding saturation to the surface of the skin. You can layer it over the top of other colours to blend them into one another but it is wise to use it sparingly as it will change the appearance of any later colours you might add over the top. ▶



## 5 PINKS & PURPLES ▶

The pinks and browns commonly associated with flesh have little role to play in this drawing. The local colour of skin is an imagined average while the surface of the skin that we actually see is always affected by the play of light and shadow. Take each area you draw on its own merits, noticing the colours within that area rather than being distracted by your expectations of skin colour. In this stage, pinks and purples will help to tie earlier colours together, a combination of Cherry Red and pale Oyster Pink contributing further warmth to the lips and cheeks. For the purple I used the subtle Wild Lavender, applying it with greater pressure to build up blocks of darker tonal value.



## ◀ 6 DARKS

Finally, the darkest tones enter the drawing. When you pick your dark colours, don't automatically gravitate towards a neutral black – most dark-coloured pencils have a bias, leaning towards green or brown or blue. I picked a warm Mars Black for Xian's eyes and mouth and a cooler Midnight Black for hair and the collar, bringing out its blue-black qualities by blending it with White.





# Features in focus: Ears

Lacking the expression of the eyes and mouth or the prominence of the nose, the ears often seem less important to a portrait than their counterpart features and the seeming complexity of their helical convolutions means that we often avoid drawing them in detail. As well as being an engaging addition to a portrait, the relationship between the ears and other features tells the viewer a lot about the tilt of the head.

## ◀ TWO CIRCLES

Seen from the side, the shape of the ear can be underpinned by two circles: a larger one above and a smaller one for the lower part of the ear. Even if you don't plan to draw the ear in detail, this simple underpinning, with an outline around it, is enough to state its position.

## ◀ HELIX & ANTIHELIX

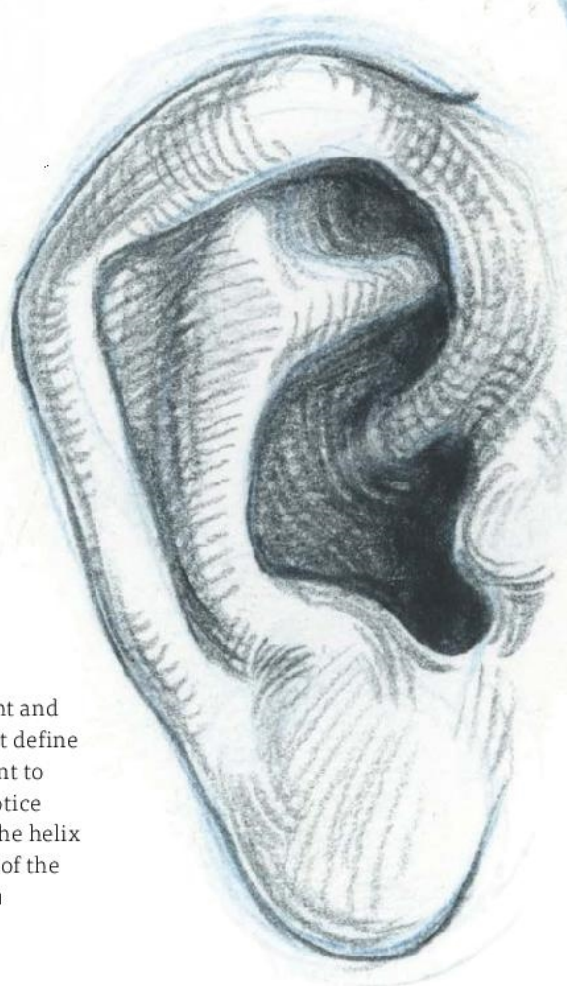
Three contours define the main structures of the ear: the outline, the internal edge of the helix and the internal edge of the antihelix, which also borders the antitragus and tragus of the ear.

## TONE & FORM ▲

Finally, you might want to elaborate on the tonally dark areas within the ear, helping the lighter, raised areas to appear more prominent. Marks which trace the cross-contours of the ear can help to accentuate its form.

## SHADOW SHAPES ►

The ear is defined by contrasts of light and dark, and alongside the contours that define the main shapes of the ear, you'll want to draw the edges of shadow shapes. Notice those edges of the shadow between the helix and antihelix which make a Y-shape of the raised internal structure of the ear. □





Professional artist and painting tutor  
**MAX PANKS** shows you how he painted his  
 favourite London street scene in watercolour

# London calling

**E**VER SINCE I FIRST SAW THE SUN setting over London's St Martin's Lane, it has been my favourite place to paint. There's so much happening there: from the iconic London architecture seen in Trafalgar Square's St Martin in the Fields, to the flash of red in the canopies below, which give this road an almost juxtaposed, Parisian feel.

This landscape lends itself so effortlessly to the artist who would describe its beauty on paper. I love the balance in hue, temperature and shapes, and with a little artistic licence, one can achieve a work of art that has the viewer's eye dancing around the painting, wishing they could step through into the warm summer evening of the city.

This tutorial aims to describe my approach to a watercolour landscape. I generally work in four distinct steps: the sketch (or the skeleton of the painting), the first wash, capturing the shadows and finally, breathing life into the painting with subtle details. Living in the city for over ten years, I've become quite fascinated and moved by the big contrast between light and dark, hot and cool, and am often mesmerised by hard diagonal shadows that cascade down the brickwork of London's rich and historic place in time.

[maxpanks.com](http://maxpanks.com) ►

## MAX'S MATERIALS

### Paint

Cass Art Artists' Watercolour Tubes 10ml; Lemon Yellow, Pyrrole Yellow Deep, Yellow Ochre, Pyrrole Orange, Alizarin Crimson, Blue Violet, Cobalt Teal, Ultramarine Blue, Indigo, or set of 12.

A Schmincke Horadam Aquarell Malkasten Metal Tin Half Pan Set of 12.

### Brushes

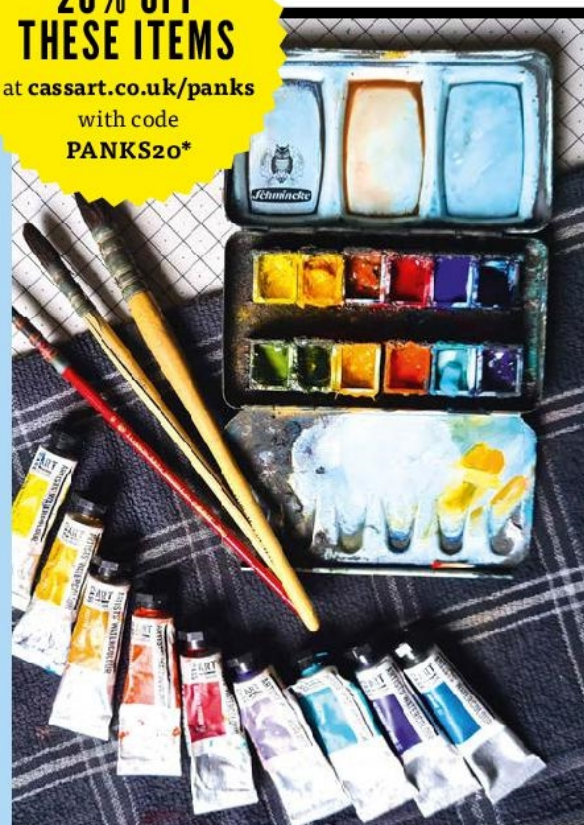
Pro Arte Renaissance Squirrel Mop Brush Series R in various sizes.

### Support

Arches Aquarelle Watercolour Block 300gsm Rough 31cmx41cm

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*17. Dantes*



## HOW-TO

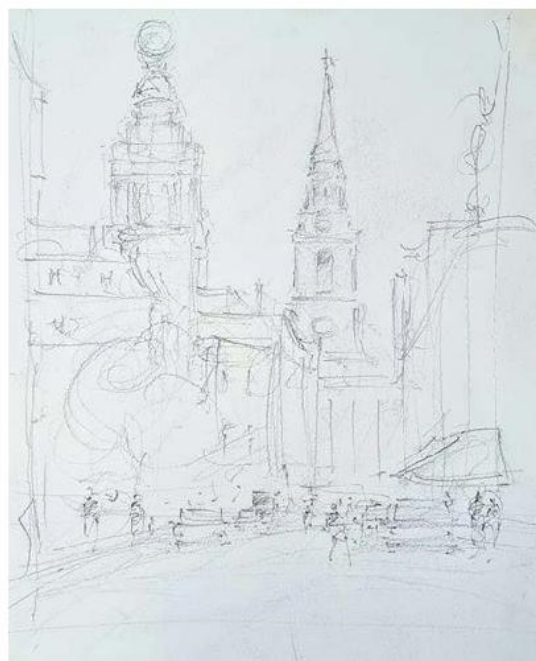
### 1 THE SKETCH ▼

I generally always start with the horizon line, slightly above or below the centre of the page. At this point, I'm trying to simplify the scene and establish the biggest shapes within the landscape. It's important not to be too precise here as ultimately, I want to finish with an impression of what is in front of me and not a replica. I want to give the image the freedom to change and exaggerate as it passes through my intellect and intuition, down through my arm and onto the paper.



### 2 COMPOSITIONAL ASPECTS ▼

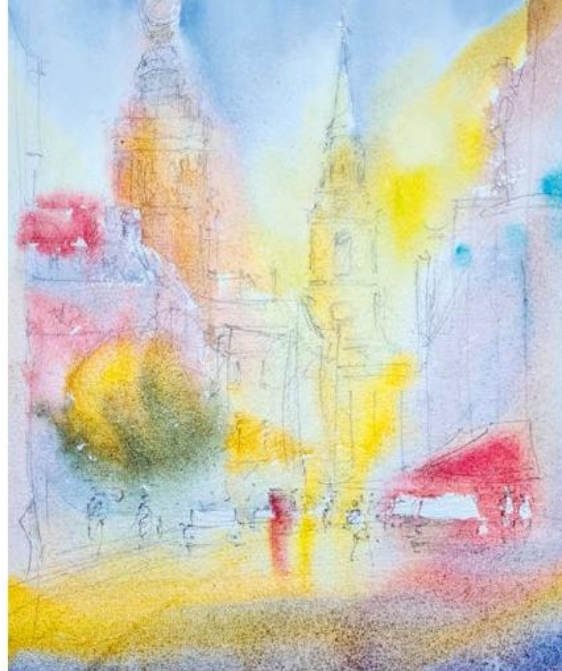
I want to make sure there is balance across the landscape. I may move the position of such things like lamp posts, cars and figures, allowing them to complement each other. I do not worry about the pencil lines being visible as I come to the end of the painting later. I think that seeing some of the sketch beneath the paint adds to the charm of watercolour and can be as important as the paint itself.



### 3 THE FIRST WASH

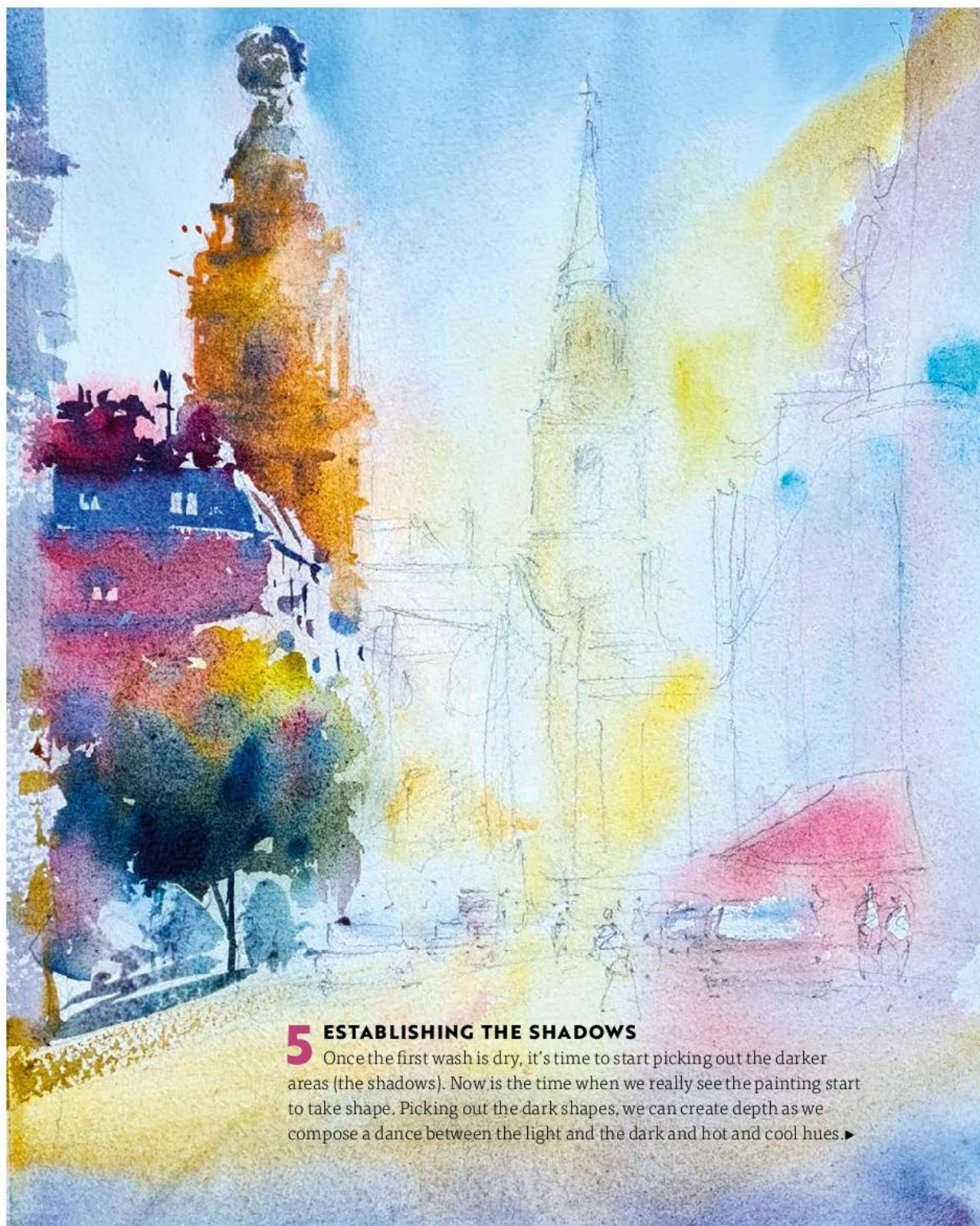
Starting from the top down, this is the most freeing part of the watercolour process. Here is where I can establish the lightest parts of the painting, which will basically be the sky, and anything the sunlight hits directly. Using the sketch as a guide, I'm placing the first layer of colour across the paper. The sky, often referred to as 'the eyes of a painting,' is one of the biggest shapes here. This is where I always begin.





#### 4 KEEP SOME OF THE WHITE PAPER

These flashes of white will become highlights later. For instance, the windscreen of a car and the sunlight bouncing off the shoulders of a dark figure. I'm using the large squirrel mop brush; I like these because they hold a lot of water and still maintain a good point. They're so versatile in that way that I can practically paint most of the work with this one brush. Finishing the first wash, I make sure I echo the colour of the sky in the foreground. This helps frame the composition and adds weight to the bottom.



#### 5 ESTABLISHING THE SHADOWS

Once the first wash is dry, it's time to start picking out the darker areas (the shadows). Now is the time when we really see the painting start to take shape. Picking out the dark shapes, we can create depth as we compose a dance between the light and the dark and hot and cool hues. ▶



## HOW-TO

### 6 THINK ABOUT THE TEMPERATURE ►

When I teach watercolour, I always say that temperature is more important than colour; it's where the emotion is. I'm also conscious of leaving some of the first wash untouched, allowing it to describe the sun as it bounces off the side of buildings and traffic.

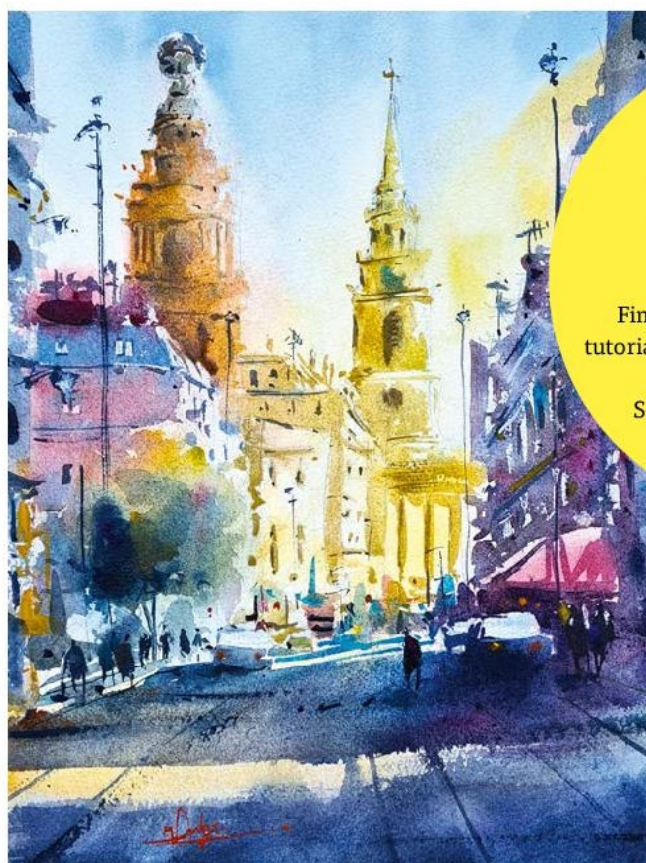
### 7 PORTRAYING DISTANCE ▼

Another way of making sure that the painting has depth is by painting less value into the objects in the background than those in the foreground. For instance, by applying less pigment to the furthest building visible here (St Martin in the Fields), we can create the illusion of distance and add further depth. It's almost as if the building is fading into the background. This also helps bring the closer objects further forward, making them pop.



### 8 PULLING THE PAINTING TOGETHER ►

Now the magic happens. This is where we breathe life into the painting and introduce directional lines, lamp posts, figures, shadows and other small details which lead the viewer's eye into the scene. We are orchestrating the journey across the landscape with our carefully placed compositional tools. Dry brush strokes, flashes of colour and high contrast between light and dark give wonderful movement and create the illusion of speed and bustle, helping to convey the feeling of a busy London street scene. □



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# People watching


Gloucestershire-based illustrator **EMMA LEYFIELD** shows you how to get into the habit of sketching people in real-life settings

**T**HERE ARE FEW THINGS more entrancing than watching an artist as they transform simple lines into fluid, lifelike figures. People are more than just components in a scene; they're an irresistible lure, but how do you capture a person on paper? When trying to define that intangible quality within a well-constructed character, I believe it comes down to three things: proportion, likeness, and movement. Of the three, movement is often missed out and capturing it can only be achieved through regular study of real people. So much of a person's look comes from their posture, habits and small, unconscious motions. Sketching them from life – their relaxed and natural self – gives you a chance to observe these and it's an invaluable practice. It's easier to capture life and movement with

in-person studies like this than drawing from photos, which often have static results. Our eyes can take in a lot more than a camera and making someone look like themselves, moving and 3D, from an immobile 2D image is difficult; a lot of information is lost.

Moving models are a challenge but, like all forms of art, practise is the answer and you will get the hang of it. People sketching is a fantastic way to improve your portraits and help loosen up your sketching. What's more, it's a very portable type of regular practice and easy to fit into short moments. As a form of study, it's high risk, high reward and quick to satisfy or discard. There's no time for lengthy rubbing out and redrawing; you put pen to paper, commit, draw and then move on to the next sketch.

[valerian.co.uk](http://valerian.co.uk) ►



*A Lady on bench.*  
An illustration from  
a photograph, taken  
as I left for a bus









*The Dentist.* An extract from a sketchbook, started from life and finished from a photograph

## 1 TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED

Take your sketchbook with you wherever you go. Actively reach for it in moments when you're waiting. If you're worried about going wrong, keep a separate scruffy sketchbook just for people sketching. Look for shapes and anatomy. Unlike landscapes, humans all have the same basic skeletal structure and the more you draw, the more you can familiarise yourself with how people are put together.

*Pub Sketching.* A fine line drawing from life



## 2 LEARNING TO SEE ►

With the impending eventuality that your sitter will walk off at an unknown point in time, there is more onus on looking, taking in the scene and memorising it, lest they shift position before you're finished. This exercise of looking trains your eyes and mind to see better. Once you start learning to see, it filters down into all your other work. Nine times out of 10, your subject will leave before you're satisfied but the act of looking is still valuable and the more you do it the more your proportions will come easily.



*Midge.* A one-hour study of the artist's sister, watching a film

## 3 PLACES TO SKETCH PEOPLE

- Cafes and pubs have the added bonus of creature comforts; settle at a table and choose people who look like they're staying a while.
- Train stations/bus stops/airports are great places for people-watching. Keep an eye out for interesting assortments of illustratable luggage.
- Urban squares usually have well-placed benches and occasionally, buskers.
- Beaches/campsites/holiday venues are places where guests lounge around for hours and so are another chance for a longer study.
- Galleries and museums are good places for sketching. People peering into exhibits create interesting poses with amazing backgrounds.
- Festivals and live events are an opportunity to sketch people in more vibrant and unusual settings than you see day to day.

Perhaps one of my favourite places to sketch people is at home or at family events. Depending on the person, it's reasonably easy to coerce friends, spouses, and relatives into sitting for a while with a cup of tea, in front of a film. By staying roughly in the same place they make a familiar and stationary model who is relaxed in their home environment.



Grace. A study of an artist and her hand movements



#### 4 TACKLING SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS ►

To make progress, it's important to keep your worries in check. Most passers-by aren't artists and are interested in someone drawing because they don't do it themselves. Remember that reality is less judgemental than the internet and unsolicited criticism is very uncommon from strangers. Try to enjoy the process and become absorbed in your drawing. If you're really nervous, it might suit you to join a sketching group or go out with a friend.

You can block out distractions by putting headphones on. This gives the message that you don't want to be disturbed even if they're not plugged into anything. Many people are curious, some delighted and others won't take any notice at all. Be prepared to answer a few common questions such as "Do you do this for a living?" or "Did you go to art school?"



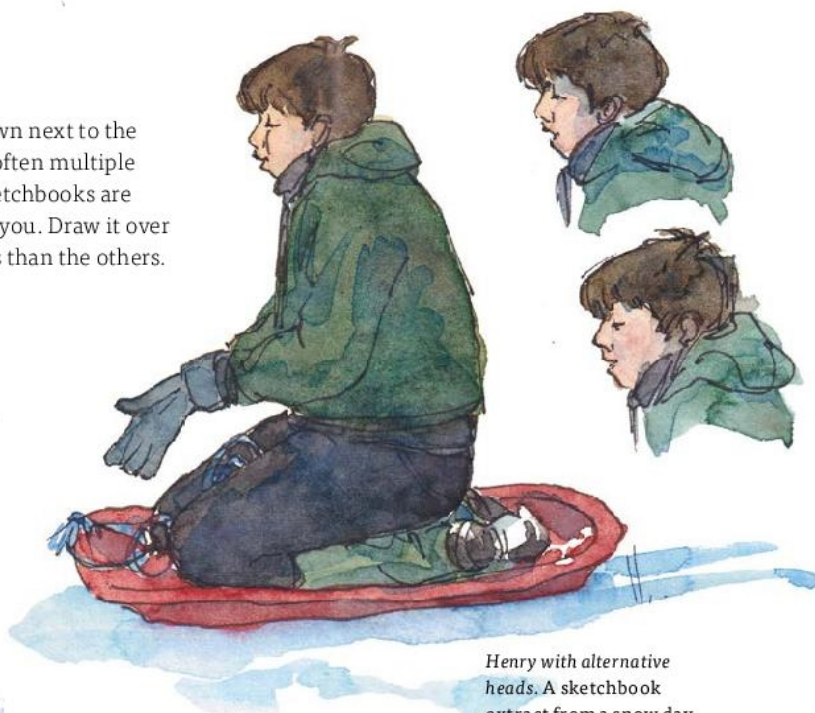
At the Living Crafts Festival. Very quick line studies of a woman looking at a stall

#### 5 REDRAWING DETAILS ►

A few of the examples shown here include figurative details redrawn next to the original. Most of the time you only see finished artwork, but there are often multiple iterations, sketches, and studies working up to the final piece. Your sketchbooks are where you can really use this to try and capture something that eludes you. Draw it over from different angles; try a few portraits to see if one has more likeness than the others. Again, this is an exercise in looking.



The Boy and the Eagle owl. A painting from a photograph, completed during lockdown



Henry with alternative heads. A sketchbook extract from a snow day, painted from a photograph later that evening

#### 6 DRAWING FROM PHOTOGRAPHS

Drawing from life isn't always practical, perhaps because you haven't got time to stop or when the weather conditions are unsuitable. While I recommend live people-sketching, this certainly doesn't mean that pictures are off-limits or that they aren't a great resource. I encourage you to try a range of different methods for a well-rounded practice and explore what you enjoy drawing. Remember to observe movement where you can and see how this feeds into your work when using photographs. □



# Bold and beautiful

Professional artist **SARAH JANE MOON** shows you how she painted this bold portrait of Reeta Loi in her signature colourful style

## SARAH JANE'S MATERIALS

### Brushes

Round hog (of various sizes) and synthetic craft brushes for detail

### Paint

Oil: Titanium White, Lemon Yellow, Cadmium Yellow, Yellow Ochre, Cadmium Red, Alizarin Crimson, Cerulean Blue, Ultramarine, Burnt Umber

### Support

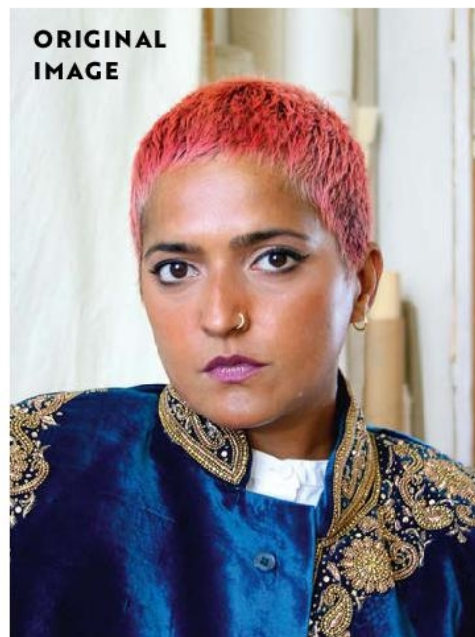
Cotton canvas  
Solvent: Kremer Shellsol T

**R**EETA LOI is someone I have long admired for their commitment to raising awareness around gender, race and LGBTQ+ equality. They are the CEO and founder of Gaysians which supports LGBTQ+ South Asians and promotes a network of organisations that span different faiths, gender identities and sexualities. Music and writing are also at the core of Reeta's work.

I am currently partway through painting a large, full-length portrait of Reeta in which they sport pink trousers to match their pink hair, wonderful shoes and a long and luxurious deep blue coat, with gold detailing. Reeta has such a stylish and bold look that I thought they would make the perfect subject for this dynamic, expressive portrait.

[sarahjanemoon.com](http://sarahjanemoon.com) ►

ORIGINAL IMAGE









## STEP BY STEP



1

### ESTABLISHING THE COMPOSITION

I often start a painting by drawing in using oil thinned with solvent. A pointy hog brush is my go-to for drawing and I use it to suggest the angle of the features and position of the head in relation to the canvas edge. Colours at this stage are very general and serve to give an approximate idea of value.



2

### BLOCKING COLOUR

I swiftly move on to a larger brush and colour (still very thin) to establish the composition in a less linear way. This gives an opportunity to try out general areas of colour and think about whether they will work together as the painting progresses. As these early layers are mostly solvent, they dry very quickly and both the drawing and the colour can be changed easily if necessary.



3

### POSITIONING THE FEATURES

I continue to build these early layers of the painting by both drawing in with a thin brush and thinking about tone and colour with a larger brush. All my hog brushes are round as I prefer the marks they make and they suit the way I apply oil, which is often with the side of the brush.

4

### BUILDING LARGE AREAS OF TONE

The composition is planned out by breaking down each aspect of the painting into large areas of tone. The oil at this stage is still relatively thin, but as the painting progresses, I keep the fat over lean rule in mind. This is the idea that less solvent is used – and by extension more oil or ‘fat’ – as the surface of a painting is built up to avoid cracking as layers dry. ►







5

**REASSESSING**

My whole way of working is deliberately constructed to allow radical change to the painting at any stage. However, this is easier at the beginning and so, if something needs to change, I try to be bold. With this painting, I decided early on that the yellow in the background wasn't working and so painted it out, replacing it with more blue and green.







6

### REFINING THE FEATURES

Here I work on the features, paying particular attention to drawing. I avoid details such as earrings, hair texture etc as these are best dealt with at the very end of the painting. At this stage, I begin to use oil without solvent to add more expressive detail to the background and to build the darks through the coat (so it will dry with time to add the lighter gold / yellow detail on top).



7

### ADDING BOLD DARKS

Using heavier brush strokes, I continually push the darks in order to provide contrast, visual interest and dynamism. Paying close attention to the direction of my marks, I try to be creative and playful in the application of oil to canvas. It is helpful to really think about the range and variety of colours within the head and not be afraid to push this in an interesting or unconventional direction.



8

### RESOLVING AND CLARIFYING

Next, I begin to bridge any tonal transitions that might appear too harsh. I apply clean fresh colour with bold strokes in the lighter areas. I am painting wet into wet with very thick oil and so there is a tendency for the paint to shift. To avoid this, I mix each colour separately with a relatively clean brush, apply it and then wipe my brushes well between brush strokes. The decorative detail is worked on the coat and the hair is suggested with gestural marks. Details of the features and jewellery are added.



9

### THINKING AGAIN

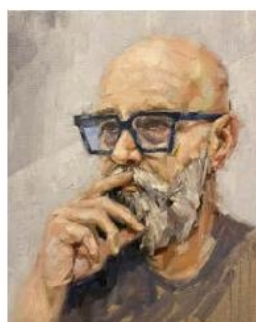
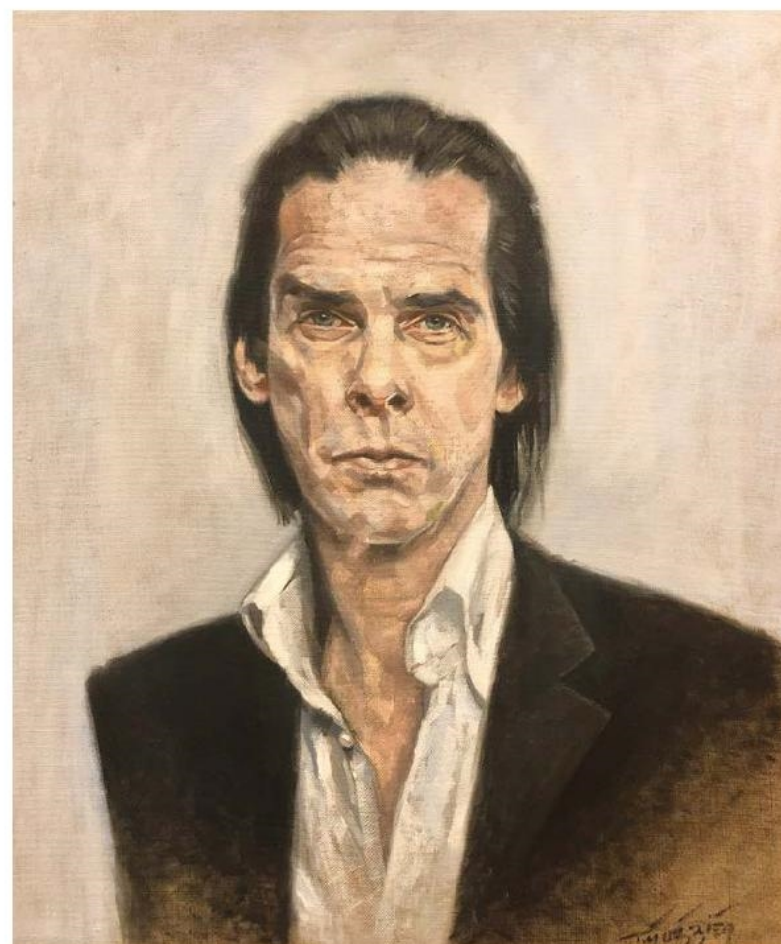
In this final stage of the painting, I try to think critically about what is and isn't working. I freshen up some of the colours through the face with pink and red and add a few areas of light Cerulean Blue to the lights which had begun to appear a little dull. Further detail is added to the hair and eyes with a smaller brush and any problematic areas are resolved. □



## ASK THE EXPERT

# Tim O'Brien

Tim O'Brien is a painter and oil paint expert at Cass Art's Brighton store. We caught up with him to find out about his practice and get his top tips for oil painters



**LEFT**  
Nick Cave, oil on linen  
**TOP**  
Untitled, oil on linen  
**ABOVE**  
Untitled, oil on linen

**M**Y PASSION FOR ART started at a young age. I was encouraged by my grandmother who was a watercolour artist. We would rummage through her green satchel full of art supplies and spend many hours learning how to paint loose washes of colour to create a coastal or countryside landscape whilst she accidentally dipped her paintbrush in her mug of tea instead of her water.

While my early attempts at painting were landscapes, I started focusing more on portraiture and figure work. I remember loving the challenges of capturing someone's likeness, and how each attempt was a unique experience. Around the age of 16, I began using oil paint, practising the techniques I'd seen in paintings by artists such as Egon Schiele, Jenny Saville and Lucian Freud, all of whom have

been able to create their own identities by mixing the traditional ideals of painting with the experimental use of form and colour.

My top brand choices of oil paint are Michael Harding, Old Holland and Cass Art. These are all professional quality, single pigment paints, which help achieve depth and richness of colour. I like using Cass Art and Pro Arte hog brushes, as these are great for bold expressive lines, but I do also use a number of synthetic brushes which are better for detail. I also like to paint on a Cass Art Linen Canvas with transparent primer so the natural colour of the linen is exposed.

I try to avoid thinners to clean my brushes, preferring 'The Masters' brush soaps as they're less harmful and preserve the brush's condition.



### TIM'S TOP TIPS

# 1

Keep things simple: At the beginning of a painting, don't worry about the details. Use effortless and free lines to get scale and proportion.

# 2

Keep your brushes clean: Oil paint can get muddy, so use a dry cloth to remove excess paint from your brushes. Sometimes it can be useful to have different brushes for dark and light.

# 3

Learn from the masters: Practise by copying from classic paintings, this will help with technique and colour mixing.

See Tim's works at [timobrienartist.com](http://timobrienartist.com). Like Tim, all of Cass Art's staff are artists and happy to share their expert advice and top tips in-store. Find your local Cass Art store at [cassart.co.uk/stores](http://cassart.co.uk/stores).



# You tell us

## MESSAGE OF THE MONTH

### Jane Kelly

I haven't done any alla prima landscape painting for some time, not since before the pandemic. I have mainly been inside, painting self-portraits and attending life drawing groups.

I was really interested in your feature, 'A direct approach' by Al Gury in the October issue and decided to follow his advice, from composition to brush strokes, step by step for some paintings of Iffley Village Churchyard, in Oxford.

I worked from sketches in situ, a painting half done *en plein air* some years ago, a charcoal sketch and a photo. I found it tricky but interesting to try to adjust the photo and the other images into one, the scale was different, but it was a real learning exercise. I was also attracted by Al Gury's bold, luxurious use of colour and followed his advice on putting down a middle-value grey/purple ground to start with.

Thank you for getting me going out in the landscape again.



### Fozia Shafique

I absolutely love art and what it stands for. As an educator and inspiring others, I am in a fortunate position to see a lot of new and existing talent. *Artists & Illustrators* is a source of inspiration in terms of the glorious artwork and being able to learn about others and what they do. This provides me with inspiration to share and for myself as an artist. It also makes for a refreshing change to be able to hold a copy of a magazine rather than look at a phone. I just wish there was more content!

### Peter David McHugh

I am a portrait artist and the step-by-step tutorials in *Artists & Illustrators* inspire me to venture into new ground, try new styles and begin passions in mediums I have yet to explore. It's always full of inspiration and various techniques to let the creative mind run wild with ideas. I started painting during 2020 in lockdown and spend hours most evenings working on my artwork. It's a dream come true.



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# *Picture this*

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In every issue, we ask an artist to tell us about a piece of work that means a lot to them. This month, we speak to American floral artist **CHRISTIE YOUNGER**

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I have always been inspired by painting florals. To me, they represent beauty and creation. I also enjoy finding peace and balance between two opposing thoughts: chaos and order, light and dark, perfection and imperfection. The embracement of imperfection is a common theme within my style and is unique to me.

I continue to pursue this theme of imperfect beauty because I can relate very much to the pressure to be perfect. The more I tried to be what everyone else wanted me to be, the worse I felt. It was only when

I embraced my imperfections and accepted my flaws that I was able to let go and enjoy the life God has intended for me.

I hope I can convey the dichotomy between perfection's existence despite very obvious imperfections. I hope the viewer sees something beautiful and, on further investigation, finds unhindered blemishes. This is both intentional and unintentional, and is the result of an artist who has accepted her imperfection only to build upon it and create perfection. [christieyounger.com](http://christieyounger.com) □





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